CHRIST INVISIBLE OUR GAIN

THE REV.
A. H. DRYSDALE, D.D.

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BY THE REV.

A. H. DRYSDALE, D.D.

AUTHOR OF 'THE EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL TO PHILEMON: A DEVOTIONAL COMMENTARY,' 'EARLY BIBLE SONGS,' ETC.

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PREFACE

The idea of this book originated in some casual talks from time to time with friends, chiefly young men who were troubled and perplexed 'about many things.' Labouring under misconceptions and confusions of thought that are but too common, they were embarrassed with difficulties not exclusively religious or scientific, but common to the whole range of knowledge. Their chief interest and concern lay, however, in the bearing of such problems on religion.

For no polemical ends and in no spirit of captious criticism or idle curiosity were they thus exercised. They aimed sincerely and earnestly at religious edification and further enlightenment. And knowing well how much easier it is to ask questions than to answer them, and how many problems are necessarily insoluble in our present state of comparative ignorance

and incapacity, they equally realized that the key to many mysteries is not to be reached by the way of a proud intellectualism, but of a good and honest heart. Their main satisfaction lay in the dissipating of many palpable sophistries that float like thistledown through the atmosphere of popular thought, or in noting the fallacies and testing the groundless assumptions that give rise to so many speculative crudities and impositions which masquerade in forms they have no title to assume.

In these snatches of conversation there was observed a remarkable tendency to recur to such an underlying thought as this: If invisible things have any real existence, why are they not made palpable, at least occasionally to sight and sense, so as to end all doubt by evidence none could resist? Why, for example, does not God Himself from time to time break forth from the stillness of His hidden working, or withdraw, if but for a moment or two, the veil that hides Him from mortal sight? Why has Christ left His Church below without ever revisiting it again

in bodily form? (for the inquirers were earnest Christian people, making credible profession of their faith, though afflicted with the questionings of an awakened and open-eyed intelligence), and why does He never make some palpable display of the body of His glory? Would not this overwhelm and annihilate all scepticism, allay all doubts and misgivings, and deal a fatal blow to every antichrist among men? Why, then, did He not prolong His stay on earth? And as there are many yearning souls in the bosom of His Church who long for such a manifestation as would be a foretaste of His promised final appearing, why is it not vouchsafed? Wherein consists the gain and advantage to us of such a privation? How can we be assured of the continued existence of One we have never seen? How do we attain to certainty about what is invisible? Is all that we see but temporary, and only what we do *not* see eternal? How do the visible and the invisible stand related to each other? Why is such supreme importance attached to faith where matters of religion

are concerned? Is faith the indispensable basis of all knowledge and of all science, as well as of religion? What is the relation of faith to sight? Is faith the essential nexus between reality and our knowledge of it? and is faith (of itself) an important *method of knowledge*?

To deal with these and such-like questions is the design of Part I. in its four chapters on Physical, Mental, Moral, and Spiritual Order—these preparatory considerations being preliminary, and designed to prepare the way to the central subject developed in Part II. This Part is an exposition of Christ's own great words respecting the expediency of His bodily disappearance, and the vast and varied gain and advantage to us from His going away and His remaining away. His continued invisibility is wholly in the interests of everything worthy of the name of spiritual religion among men. He shows how indispensable it is that He should be invisible, not only for the original founding of a spiritual dispensation in connection with His own name, but for building up a spiritual kingdom, and for

creating a spiritual life and experience, as well as for maintaining a spiritual interest that should increasingly prevail right onward to the end.

The early disciples who shrank from the ordeal of Christ's bodily withdrawal came afterwards not only to acquiesce, but to glory in it. They came to know from their own experience that the outward loss was an abiding and fruitfully productive gain. To bring this out in clear relief is the main purpose of Part III., which handles this subject as it is presented in the Epistles, and as Christ intimated it would duly be made to appear. For what are the Epistles, but multiplied and developed echoes of Christ's own sayings? What He dropped in brief hints or whispered suggestions, the Apostles caught up and iterated in their Epistles. When a cannon is fired at the Falls of Lodore, by the side of Derwentwater, reverberations are heard echoing along its banks, as if reflected from every promontory. And if they seem to die away at the farther end, how they renew themselves with an increasing volume and

loudness as they turn back again along the opposite shore! So do the words of Jesus find echoes and reverberating responses in the Apostolic writings. His original utterances are unfolded and evolved with marvellous power in the words of Spirit-taught men. 'It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Spirit shall not come'—how this is emphasized and iterated by the Apostles in all they say of the Spirit, as *the Spirit of Christ* dwelling in them, and inaugurating a spiritual economy, experience, life, and fellowship solely in His name! If *He* say, 'Thomas, because thou hast seen Me thou hast believed,' how *they* all in turn claim to know in their happy experience the blessedness of believing on Him apart altogether from seeing Him! 'We have known Christ after the flesh; but henceforth we know Him so no more,' is their uniform testimony.

And what is true of faith is not less applicable to hope; for, in the words of the Apostle John, 'We know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him *as He is*. And every man that hath

this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.' The like holds good of love also and joy, as sayeth the Apostle Peter: 'Jesus Christ, Whom having not seen, ye love: in Whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, attaining the accomplishment of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.'

So the third section of the book is occupied with explaining and illustrating the vast and varied gains and advantages of a Saviour invisible for our Christian faith, hope, love, and joy. The concluding words are meant to emphasize the spirituality of genuine religion, and to show how this derives gain from a Christ Who is invisible.

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PART I

INTRODUCTORY

CHAPTER I

MATERIAL ORDER; OR, THE CERTAINTY AND REALITY OF THE INVISIBLE

A life for the Unseen through the Unseen is to be regarded as the only perfect life.—*The Unseen Universe,* p. 192.

As one chief temptation is to live in the neglect of Religion, from that frame of mind which renders many persons almost without feeling as to anything which is not the object of their senses, so there are other persons of a deeper sense of what is invisible who . . . have a practical feeling . . . *that things are not the less real for their not being the objects of sight.*

Butler's *Analogy,* Pt. II. ch. vi.

CHAPTER I

MATERIAL ORDER; OR, THE CERTAINTY AND REALITY OF THE INVISIBLE

(i) *We live in the midst of realms invisible.* We soon become aware of the limits of our eyesight, and of things visible. Things seen we cannot escape. They are impressively present with us, and no one can ignore or evade them. This is not, however, the whole of our experience. There is a sphere of the invisible not less real or certain, though less obtrusive or self-assertive. It is easy to come under the power of the visible and forget that we must take the invisible also into account, whether we attend to this instinct within us or not. The material world itself is but very partially subject to our sight; and the vast world of matter which we do not and cannot see (and it is well for us we do not see it, or life would become intolerable) is much bigger and more important than what our present

eyes can discern. For, however far we may be able to see with the aid of a telescope, we cannot escape the conviction of an illimitable beyond. And marvellous as are the revelations made by the microscope, these but the more assure us of boundless depths of matter that can never be brought within the scope of our vision.

And not only are we thus *environed* by the invisible, and camped out in the midst of it, but we have equally irresistible evidence of an invisible realm *within*. We have but to withdraw our thoughts (and what is there more real, yet more invisible, than our thoughts?) from the outward, to become instantly aware of a world of hidden machinery at work in ourselves, a world of ideas, feelings, desires, hopes, memories, none the less real and important, though all invisible.

Two worlds are ours: and each one may descry
A mystic heaven and earth within, plain as the sea or sky.

We are in as close and vital a touch with these invisibles as with any visible things, to say the least, and we can no more get away from the assurance of our thoughts, feelings, and emotions than from the certainty of our head or our limbs.

This hidden world, without or within, may,

no doubt, be to many an unfamiliar and untrodden field—for people are wonderfully ignorant of the universe they live in, and especially of their own human nature, as if they shrank from the old oracle, 'Man, know thyself'—but there the double region of the invisible unquestionably is, with scenes not less actual and stirring than those that are forced upon our eyesight.

'Two things there are'—they really *are*—says a famous philosopher, 'which the more I consider fill me with wonder; the starry realm above, and the moral law within. The one connects me with the world of sense, the other with the world of mind: and both land me in the region of the invisible.'[1] And why? Why but because the visible is subordinate to the invisible; and the outer is meant to minister, and be subject, to the inner? For—

> The sun is high and the stars are high,
> But the thought of man is higher.

All that is visible is but the time-vesture of the invisible: a kind of deposit from it, or an out-blossoming of it, 'so that,' as an Apostle says, 'things which are seen have not been made out of things which do appear.'

[1] Kant, *Kritik der Praktischen Vernunft, sub fin.*

The seen is thus a dependency of the unseen : and what is visible is meant to evoke thought, and, as a matter of fact, it does call men's thoughts into play and liveliest exercise.

(ii) *The visible is but a stepping-stone to the invisible.* For it is only as the seen is expressive of the unseen, or is found to interpret it, that it becomes interesting, or worth thinking about at all. If no thought, plan, purpose, or meaning be contained or enclosed in the visible things of creation, any thought expended on these would be merely wasted. If no mind be expressed there, what would be the sense of applying mind to it ? In that case, physical science were the grossest superstition, and one of the mightiest delusions with which poor human nature has ever been afflicted. The ignorant savage, in that case, would have the best of the argument, and would stand forth fully justified in remaining indifferent to any attempt at intelligent understanding or appreciation of the realm of Nature at all.

Happily, we are impelled by the very constitution of our being and by the force of circumstances to associate thoughts of the invisible with the most ordinary of visible things. The thinking power is invisible, but

the world is full of its evidences and manifestations in the books we read, the implements and machines with which we labour, the ships and houses and bridges we build, the engines, factories, workshops, and all the other methods of trade, business, or commerce—all these are the *outward expression* of the invisible thoughts and mind of man. We cannot but realize that things seen are indices of things unseen. Our bodily organism, for example, is the outcome and exponent of that hidden something we call life. For it is now a scientific truism that life is not a result of the visible organism. On the contrary, it is life that rears and moulds the material body by which it manifests its reality, its presence, and its power. It is the seen that is the dependency of the unseen.

True, there is a physical basis of life, just as there is a physical basis of mind and spirit—in other words, we have no knowledge of life, mind, and spirit manifesting themselves apart from outward or visible entities—but they are not visible entities themselves. The physical basis is not the life, nor the same as the invisible forces. In short, it is the visible that springs from the invisible, and not *vice versa*.

And it is the invisible that chiefly lends

interest to the visible. Let any one glance round a room, and note the objects—chairs, table, floor, walls, ceiling, and the like. These are not mere heterogeneous heaps of rubbish, casually thrown together. They express ideas, and only so far as they do so, and are the outcome of tastes, purposes, and designs of architect, workman, or owner, do they appeal to us.[1] So the pain of a wound excites the nature and stirs the whole machinery of our inner being. The wound itself we can see, and the nerves that convey the sensation, but we cannot see the sensation or feeling of the pain, however terribly real.

Here is the boot of a dead child. We are in touch at once with the craftsmanship of the tanner who prepared the leather, and of the shoemaker who adapted it to the foot. But here is the mother who has lost the child. What in the boot makes her heart beat faster, and fills her eyes with tears ?

> Fond memory brings the light
> Of other days around her.

The boot is to her no mere trifling object of sight. It comes home to her laden with sacred deposits from the unseen. For it is the mind,

[1] We, of course, see only surfaces ; any notion of solidity comes from elsewhere.

not the eye, that intelligently sees ; it is the hidden nature, not the ear, that listens and attends, If what men see with the eye be all, it were a futile and idiotic task to explain or interpret things visible.

No doubt at first sight the visible seems the only, or at least the only real and important, thing. And truly, if things were always what they casually seem, or if we were 'cribbed, cabined, and confined' within the limits of the visual, much could be said in favour of that view of things, just as much can be pleaded in favour of the notion which all the senses *seem* to confirm, that sun, moon, and stars move over our heads and look down from a solid blue vault upon a fixed and motionless earth. Yet there is no solid blue vault. It is simply a reflection like the rainbow, only more permanent. The blue rays reflected from the earth travel so much slower than the red and yellow rays which have escaped before them that the lingering rays make the lower atmosphere blue, and the limitations of our eyesight account for the concave form. Nor is the earth motionless. It is a huge motor-car, rushing along at 1,100 miles a minute, or nearly 70,000 miles an hour ; yet people are wholly unaware of it all the while. To the same class

of illusions[1] belongs the notion that visible things are the most real and enduring, and that a dubious shadowy existence belongs to what we cannot see. The very opposite is the case.

(iii) *Things visible are all temporary.* That matter is the solid and abiding reality is a popular and was for long a scientific illusion. But now all science is moving toward the Apostle's verdict—'The things which are seen are temporal [temporary], but the things which are unseen are eternal.'

We speak of the everlasting hills, and the strength of the rocks. And, no doubt, relatively to the generations of men and their works, the mountains stand like ribs of adamant. But Tennyson tells us truly:

> The hills are shadows, and they flow
> From form to form, and nothing stands:
> They melt like mist, these solid lands,
> Like clouds they shape themselves, and go.

For what, after all, is visible matter? What, in its last analysis, but impalpable vapour, condensations of invisible gas, molecules of inconceivable fineness and in constant flux, and with movement so awfully rapid that to

[1] There is a world of difference, of course, between an illusion and a delusion. An illusion is based on an *inadequate* conception; a delusion on a total misconception, or a conception that is entirely false and mistaken.

our senses as presently constituted they seem perfectly still and motionless? What is a molecule but the smallest conceivable particle of a substance in which the qualities of the substance still inhere? But while the physicist cannot subdivide any molecule, the chemist, with his more subtle processes, resolves it into its component atoms. A particle of sugar is crushed into finest powder, yet each molecule retains the qualities of sugar. But dissolve the molecule in water into its elemental atoms. These no longer retain the qualities of the original substance, but become a combination of carbon and water, which, by heat, passes from a liquid to vapour or gases, one part oxygen and two of hydrogen. So, even atoms are found to be manufactured or composite articles that pass away into yet simpler and more impalpable ether. And this is what we call matter, solid substance, which we are apt to suppose the most permanent and enduring of realities. Yet all this permanence is seeming! And matter, far from stability or abidingness, is constant only in its incessant flux, vastly too rapid and minute for eyes to see. As Lord Kelvin says: 'Matter may consist of the rotating portions of a perfect fluid which

continuously fills space,' and the whole of it 'like the baseless fabric of a vision' that 'leaves not a wrack behind,' whenever it ceases to rotate.

For under the requisitions of modern discovery, what new aspects matter is assuming! Its whole structure, far from the fixity and durability once attributed to it, is getting allied to the very 'stuff that dreams are made of.' Views, roughly known as materialistic, which regarded visible substance as possibly eternal, have been receiving some shrewd knocks of late. Such recently discovered elements as radium and helium have been very disconcerting to many scientists, revealing qualities that quite upset their former favourite calculations, and involving conclusions that run athwart even what quite recently were held fixed and sure scientific ideas of substance and natural law. Much of all the previous conceptions of matter has had to be given up, and science has become bewildered at the new problems it has now to face. What if things we see are made visible only because of the vibrations or rotations of an invisible ether out of which they are composed? What if there be no mysterious substratum behind the phenomena of motion? or if all phenomena which we call material be only complicated

modes of motion, as the ultimate unit of the material? Or what if an electric discharge, as revealed in the discovery of *electrons*, be only the way ether behaves; a name for 'that which undulates' or rotates in incessant orbital intricacies?[1] What if the solidity itself depends on these rotations or vibrations, and matter itself be but the *manifestations* of *motion*; and the more rapid and intense the vibrations, the more solid the substance? Our bodies can pass through thin matter like the atmosphere, but not through a solid wall. Why? What if it be simply because the vibrations are more rapid and intense in the solid wall, and less so in the atmosphere than in our body? So strangely true is it that the more solid and permanent-looking the substance, the more inconceivably minute but rapid its internal shiver and change.

It is visible and solid matter, then, that is the seat and scene of incessant flux; only the

[1] This points to the pleasing notion of the ancient quarrel between science and philosophy at last coming possibly to an end. From the days of Democritus (a contemporary of Socrates), with his atomic materialism, and of his opponent Plato, who insisted that whatever Democritus made of motion, it at least was not the matter which he made it out to be, this conflict has continued from time to time between science and philosophy to this day: though certain classes of scientists and philosophers have often joined hands in defending materialistic and sensationist hypotheses and theories in at least some of their fundamental aspects, just as other scientists and philosophers have happily gone in the opposite direction.

invisible gives evidence of motionless and intransient calm! 'Things seen are temporary.' They shall perish. 'All these things shall be dissolved.' The forces at work are wearing them out 'like a garment, and they shall be changed.' Those hidden and awful powers that hold them together shall themselves burn them up. One drop of water contains in its bosom an electric force equal to a whole lightning flash. How stupendous, then, the fire stores wrapped up in an ocean! And many worlds since the days of Tycho Brahè have been known to be thus dissolved. So recently as 1901 the starworld *Nova Persei* was seen to be on fire, and was eagerly watched by multitudes of astronomers passing through many transitions till it slipped back at length into the impalpable form from which it had first emerged.

(iv) *How we realize the invisible.* We may not, however, think lightly of so wonderful a gift as eyesight, by which we see not only the sun, ninety-five millions of miles away, but the fixed stars themselves, so immensely farther from us. But how poor is eyesight after all, as compared with mental vision! For—

> How swift is a glance of the mind!
> Compared with the speed of its flight,
> The tempest itself lags behind,
> And the swift-winged arrows of light.

Eyesight has its own marvellous but modest functions, and must be kept in its own place. For, like language, while it is a very wonderful, it is at best a very imperfect and inadequate instrument for that potency in us we call thought, or mind, or spirit, whereby we wander at will through infinity and eternity, far beyond what eye can reach. We have but to cast our thought beyond all worlds, and we are instantly there without movement or fatigue, as if superior alike to space or time. For spirit, like mind or thought, is not spread out in space like matter; nor in acting does it move through space from one outward point to another. Nor is it subject to the laws and conditions affecting matter. It has laws and conditions all its own, and to these we must conform, if we would know the reality of powers and forces which cannot be made visible save in their phenomenal issues or results. We cannot intercept thought in space as we can intercept light, heat, sound, or electric discharge. We have but to whisper of 'home,' and, though it be thousands of miles away, lo! we are instantly there with the speed of a heart-throb.

And we all of us know mind. It is only by mind we can know matter; in fact, it is

mind that is presupposed in the knowledge of matter, and not matter that is presupposed in mind. Both the certainty that we know, and the knowledge itself, exist only in the mind, and nowhere else. No man can know anything of what he sees save by his knowing mind. And he not only knows, but he knows that he knows. He knows that he thinks and feels. He not only sees, but he knows that he sees. And he is as sure that he thinks and feels and wills as that he sees; and all this is as tremendously real to him as is the feeling or sense of pain, of which he knows that it is he who feels, and not another. This is that *consciousness of self* which is far enough removed from sight or sense, but which furnishes evidence as sure and real as all the senses put together.

Again, I feel warm—that is a sensation. I am sure I feel warm—that is knowledge; and both the sensation and the knowledge have their seat in the living mind. But I *was* warm yesterday—that is not sensation, it is memory; and I know and am sure I was feeling warm yesterday—that knowledge comes from faith or trust in memory, which is another source of evidence other than sight; for I am compelled by the very constitution

of my nature to make this element of our being, which we call *faith, a source of evidence and a method of knowledge* quite as sure as eyesight itself, and wider in its sweep, if not so vivid or impressive. And faith is a more essential part of my being than eyesight. Many live without eyesight, but no intelligent human being can subsist without faith.

How groundless the notion that we have surer evidence of matter than we have of spirit, or that we know more of matter than we do of spirit! We have as sensible evidences of mind as of matter, to say the least; and the knowledge we get from faith is far more, and more important, than we get from eyesight. What we learn by inference is far greater than all we know from our powers of seeing. Most of our knowledge comes not from what we see, but what we believe; only the senses attest matter more directly, while they but indirectly attest spirit or mind, though none the less surely, by their undeniable and palpable effects. For we have different ways of attaining knowledge, and the certainty of some things is assured to us by a different method from what gains us assurance of other things. Some things we know intuitively, like our own existence; others

experientially, like the sustaining properties of food; others by testimony of friends, like the day of our birth; others by the testimony of our senses, like sound by hearing; others, like the principles of science or the hidden relations of things, by reasoning, inference, and experiment; and others still, of a moral nature, by sincere and humble obedience to what is already known, as when Jesus says: 'If any one is willing to do the will of God, he shall *know* of the teaching, whether it be of God' (John vii. 17).

Once more, all people act on the assured principle that there can be no effects or changes without some cause. If a careless workman become careful, all people know by *intuition*, not by sight or by ordinary faith, that there is some reason for it. It is on such *intuitions* that all knowledge and all science must be built. We cannot even by reason *demonstrate* their truth; but universal reason attests and sanctions them. 'Believe, that you may understand,' was the maxim of one free-thinker; and its opposite and counterpart, 'Understand, that you may believe,' was the maxim of another. Both are true when truly interpreted. For while intuitive beliefs are the very basis of reason, they must also

bear the test of reason and be in accord with it. We cannot prove that 'things which are equal to the same thing are equal to one another'; we have to assume it as a revelation made in reason, and then bring it to the test or standard of our rational intelligence. Some intuitions are *above* reason, but none can be contrary to it. Such *intuitive convictions* reside in the mind, and people cannot get rid of them or shake them off *as sources of evidence* and methods of knowledge which they rely upon with as much confidence as on their very senses. A jury cannot see a felon's malice, but they may have overwhelmingly outward evidences of its terrible realness in its bitter and violent results.

So we grow assured that the chief thing manifested through the visible is not matter, but mind. And it were an intolerable thought to suppose that there is no intelligence perfectly comprehending the entire sum total and order of all things. 'I had rather believe all the fables of the Talmud or Alcoran, than that this universal frame is without a mind, says Lord Bacon. And even the agnostic thinker says: 'We are obliged to regard every phenomenon as a manifestation of some power by which we are acted on; and though

omniscience is unthinkable, yet as experience discloses no bounds to the diffusion of phenomena, we are unable to think of limits of this power, while the criticisms of science teach us that this power is incomprehensible.' By parity of reasoning we are equally obliged to regard every phenomenon as a manifestation not only of power but of mind, wisdom, will, heart, and conscience. Of course this power is incomprehensible; but not unknowable; for even the agnostic thinker knows that we are acted on by it, and that we cannot think of limits to it. This is good old doctrine: 'Who can by searching find out God; who can find out the Almighty unto perfection?' And no wonder; for who can find out to perfection the simplest objects, the clod of earth, the stone in the street, or the flower in the field? Cannot a man of ordinary intelligence put thousands of questions about each of these and other simple objects which nothing short of omniscience could answer? We are finite and limited, and so is all our science.

As to 'the incomprehensible and unthinkable power,' of which the agnostic philosopher speaks, we learn what masses of knowledge we get of it, even from his own showing,

though no eye has seen it! He says we know it as power, as power manifested in phenomena, as power that acts on us. Yet all this power is invisible. We know it not by sight, but in its effects. We know it, therefore, by faith, which is the organ of the invisible; an organ of knowledge, far vaster in its sweep, and far higher in its reach, than any sight. So we cannot see thought, or mind, or feeling, but we can see their sensible effects and evidences. No eye hath seen God at any time, but any eye can see His overwhelming evidences and manifestations, if only it like to look long enough and in the right quarter.[1] And any ear if it listen long

[1] Euphranor, the religious believer and interlocutor in Berkeley's *Minute Philosopher*, suggests to his opponent Alciphron that we all have as clear and immediate a certainty of God in *His* working as each one of us has of himself and his own doings. 'What!' exclaims the unbelieving Alciphron, 'do you pretend you can have the same assurance of the being of a *God* that you have of *mine*, whom you actually see standing before you?' 'The very same, if not greater,' replies Euphranor. 'How do you make this appear?' says Alciphron. 'By the person Alciphron is meant,' Euphranor answers, 'an individual thinking being, and not the hair, skin, or visible surface, or any part of the outward form, colour, or shape of Alciphron.' This the sceptic readily grants. 'And in granting this,' rejoins Euphranor, 'you grant that in a strict sense you do not *see* Alciphron, but only such visible signs and tokens as suggest and infer the being of his *invisible* thinking principle, or soul. Even so . . . while I cannot with the eyes of flesh behold the invisible God, yet I do in the strictest sense behold and perceive such operations as suggest, indicate, and demonstrate an invisible God. As certainly, and with the same evidence as do suggest to me

enough can hear the spirit of Nature herself declare:

> So at the roaring loom of Time I ply,
> And weave for God the garment that thou seest Him by.[1]

So we see how 'without faith it is impossible to please God'—as without faith it is impossible to please a fellow man. It were the grossest insult to say, 'I do not believe you; and I have no faith in you; I do not trust you.'

But as we are all limited, we must all walk by faith, and not by mere sight—though it is only the believing Christian soul that carries out this principle fully and consistently. Christian faith is like the child that hears the ocean's sound when it applies its ear to 'the convolutions of the smooth-lipped shell':

> Even such a shell the Universe itself
> Is to the *ear of faith*; and there are times,
> I doubt not, when to each it doth impart
> Authentic tidings of invisible things—
> Of ebb and flow and ever-during power,
> And central peace subsisting at the heart
> Of endless agitation.[2]

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the existence of your soul, spirit, or thinking principle; which, indeed, I am convinced of only by a few signs or effects of one small organized body, whereas I do at all times and in all places perceive *sensible signs* which evince the Being of a God.'

[1] Goethe.

[2] Wordsworth's *Excursion*, bk. iv.

CHAPTER II

MENTAL ORDER; OR, PERSONALITY AND THE INVISIBLE

Un' alma sola
Che vive e sente e sè in sè rigira.

DANTE, *Purg.*, XXV. 75

Personality implies an order of existence transcending the visible and material order. *Perfect* personality is in God alone.—LOTZE, *Microcosmus*, ix. 44, and *Philosophy of Religion*, iv. sect. 41.

No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.—*John* i. 18.

Whom no man hath seen, nor can see.—1 *Tim.* vi. 16.

CHAPTER II

MENTAL ORDER; OR, PERSONALITY AND THE INVISIBLE

Man has been the victim of two opposite but corrupt and misleading tendencies in religion—a disposition to personify or make a god of anything in Nature, which is Polytheism; or to ignore personality altogether, identifying God and Nature, which is Pantheism.

Both are idolatries, or perversions of the religious instinct, one being the idolatry of untutored paganism; the other that of an over-refining, philosophizing intellectualism.

The Hebrew faith in the living God is the chief historic witness against the one. The Christian faith of the disclosure of God in Jesus Christ is the adequate and abiding bulwark against the other.

And is not this exactly what we might antecedently expect? For if in external Nature we find manifestations of thought,

emotion, and will on a Divine scale, would it not be passing strange were we not to find sooner or later in human form a higher disclosure of the Divine, since human nature contains within itself all Nature in miniature, but with personality over and above, as its own supreme and peculiar distinction? For is not personality man's unique prerogative, a phenomenon of human experience wholly unknown to lower nature? Or if there be any tendency toward it in the humble creation, it remains but a tendency at best, like that sort of blossom which may promise but never attains, nor in the nature of things ever can attain to any actual fruition? A human being is not like a flower, a mere specimen of its class, nor like an animal, an irresponsible bundle of instincts which hold it in bondage to its species only; but one who has risen to the free dignity of a consciously independent or individual self.

(i) *Personality: what it is.* By personality is meant that conscious unity in which our invisible attributes meet to give us a conviction or assurance of an abiding and persistent personal identity, an awareness of self as an individual or separate entity. We of course may not know, so as to define and describe,

all that is implied in this, but the fact of it is given in every act of human knowledge, from which it is inseparable. In short, whenever we say or think that we know, we are aware that it is *we* who know, and we are as sure of this as we are of our own existence. True, there may be involved in this a large mass of subconscious and undefined possibilities of which as yet we may not be fully aware. It may be dormant in us, or exist only with some in a very infantile state. And, like an infant, though complete in all its parts and functions, it may not as yet with many be fully grown or have reached the full height of its development. But the consciousness of self is an indestructible item in all our human consciousness, whether we are reflectively aware of it or not.

We can, of course, stand forth as it were outside of ourselves, and make ourselves the object of our own thought and reflection. It is a prerogative of human intelligence to become a contemplator of itself, so as to study its own invisible phenomena and workings. But whether we employ this capacity or not, there is no rational being who can divest himself of self-consciousness, or an intuitive awareness of his own separate individuality.

And not only so, but there is an emotional or conative element involved in this assurance: self-consciousness being attended with a certain self-assertiveness, as of 'a unique existence which is perfectly impervious to other selves—impervious in a fashion of which the impenetrability of matter is but a faint analogue,' so that if called in question, or denied, it rises up with a power of self-protestation that will not be gainsaid, so vehement and inexpugnable is the sense of its reality. But the highest aspect of it is, its awareness of the power of self-determining action or self-regulative control within the limits of its own natural ability. This is our supreme distinction as human beings—this peculiar possession of ourselves and our own activities. And in this lies our sense of freedom as rational, responsible, and moral beings. We are, of course, subject to the reign of universal law, and are not independent of external forces. Our freedom is limited like our power, but it moves unfettered within the scope of its own little circle. For while all other things are determined entirely by external causes and agencies, we have such power and liberty of choice as to be determined not from without, but from within.

Our will is in a certain sense and degree a

causal or creative force ; for while energy can be supplied to it from without, it is ever a self-acting energy from within. We have in ourselves, within limits, free or constitutional self-government. An appetite, a desire, or other motive does not sway me until I freely adopt it, make it my own, and identify myself with it. In short, motives are mine, not me. True, I must act, and cannot help myself in this respect, but how, or why, or in what direction is within the compass and competency of my own personal determination.

This is what makes me a free agent, by which is meant that it is not the appetite, the desire, the influence that is the proper *cause* of my acting in a particular direction. The cause is myself in my own freely deliberating will. And if any one say that my choice is determined by my habits and character, what is that but saying that the way I act is the resultant of a whole series of past deliberations freely chosen, and among which I am still free to choose and arrange in select groups, so as to give direction and momentum to my present choice? Character and habits after all are mine, not me ; so that it is not the strongest motive that rules me, but it is I who determine the strongest motive. No doubt my freedom

is limited within the scope of my natural ability; and by wilful sin I may still further curtail my freedom or viciously limit natural ability, and so fall into slavery or moral disability. By natural ability is meant, 'I can, if I will'; and by moral disability, 'I would not, if I could.'

This, then, is personality. It involves a rational, emotional, and deliberative power—a unity of self-consciousness in thought, feeling, and will.

(ii) *Personality, human and divine, is rooted in the invisible.* Personality belongs necessarily to the non-material and invisible order of things. Not that, though transcending material subsistence, it does not interact freely upon it—just as the chemical includes and transfigures the mechanical order, or as the vital the chemical in turn. But, while rooted in the invisible, it has with us a physical basis, and is associated with a bodily organism, though it can exist and manifest itself apart from the body. We speak correctly enough of a handsome or distinguished-looking person, but we then speak figuratively or metaphorically, personality not being physical or material, though able to display itself through an outward or visible form.

External things may call out and stimulate our personality, but they do not constitute it. Our human personality, being finite and dependent, admits, of course, of stimulus from without; but personality is of itself neither finite nor infinite: it may be limited or illimitable, it may be human or divine, conditioned or not conditioned. An infinite, self-existing, self-sufficing God needs no stimulus from without, and admits of none, but our human nature does.

There may be a weak or a strong personality; but neither weakness nor strength, finiteness nor infiniteness, is of the essence of personality. We have already seen what is meant by a person; and there is nothing inconsistent or incompatible between the conception of a human person who is finite and a Divine person who is infinite, any more than the idea of finiteness is incompatible with that of infiniteness. Nor is there anything incompatible, still less inconsistent, in the idea of a personal union that embraces both the finite and the infinite within itself.

This we may perchance not be able to comprehend, but it is not difficult or impossible for us to *ap*prehend. For there being nothing in it self-contradictory, there is nothing to

hinder us in the most clear and decisive mental grasp of it. In like manner, there is nothing at all incompatible between the idea of one personal God and of three persons in the Godhead. This, no doubt, may be so stated as to become a contradiction in *terms*; but it is not, in itself, a contradiction in thought. The two-fold command, 'Answer a fool according to his folly,' and, 'Answer *not* a fool according to his folly,' is no doubt a contradiction in words, but a moment's consideration shows there is not any contradiction in *reality*. That in the one personal God, infinite, eternal, and incomprehensible, there should be inherently and essentially a threefold personality named the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, is no more a contradiction than that there are myriads of human persons in the one human nature, each one possessing the whole of that nature; or that the one human nature should embrace in itself three whole and distinct other natures, the material, the animal, and the rational, moral, or spiritual nature; or that these three natures should subsist in the nature of each human personality.

This may be a mystery and a paradox, but it is in itself no impossibility, and there is

nothing in it incapable of true apprehension. For plurality of persons may imply, as it does in the case of the three persons in the Divine nature, plurality not in all that *constitutes* a person, but only in that which *distinguishes* a person. So unity of person implies not unity in all that constitutes the person, but only in that which is *distinctive* of the person. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are real persons, in the common and complete sense of the term; but yet each distinct person inheres in the one common Divine personal essence, the whole of which each of them possesses, although the Father is not the Son, nor is the Son the Father, nor is the Holy Spirit either the Father or the Son.

Human analogies fail, and they can of course but imperfectly represent the distinctions in the Divine Nature, or the mode of being, or the mutual offices and relations. But they may suffice to exemplify their importance, and to show that there may be three Persons, and yet not three Gods nor three eternal separate existences. More is not needful to realize an inherent threefoldness in the redemptive covenant and salvation of mankind, nor is more requisite to secure for Father, Son, and Holy Ghost our trust,

reverence, and worship; and all to the one alone living and true personal God.

Nor is the scientific reading of Nature without suggestive parallels of kindred trinity in unity, as in the well-known case of three rays inseparably inhering in the one ray, and the one ray revealing itself in three distinct yet essentially united and indwelling rays. First a *heat* ray, felt but not seen; secondly a *light* ray, seen but not felt by the orb of the eye; and thirdly the *actinic* ray, neither felt nor seen, but only realized in its chemical action, as in photographic processes. No man hath seen God at any time; He is the invisible God, whom no eye hath seen, or can see. The only-begotten Son in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him. 'He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.' 'The Holy Ghost, Whom the Father shall send in My name, but Whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not. Ye see Him, for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. He shall take of Mine, and show it unto you.'

This is all mysterious, but quite self-consistent, and wholly understandable as a combination of personal agencies in the one self-existing Personal Being. Hence the idea

of our own personality makes the idea of an infinite personal God to spring up so readily and spontaneously in the human mind. And invisibility here is not only no barrier, but a positive help to the conviction, so inextricably involved in one another are the two ideas of self-consciousness and of God-consciousness. They naturally stand or fall together. Impersonal or pantheistic conceptions of God invariably enfeeble the sense of their own personality in those who entertain them. Hence among Oriental races, debilitated by pantheistic religions, the notion men have of their own personality is low and weak, even to vanishing-point. And obversely, where the conviction of personality is low, there the religious idea, the conception of the Divine, is pantheistic. A man's vivid perception and appreciation of his own personality gives birth to his assurance of the reality of a personal God. This is a conception easy for man's nature to realize. He has the reality within himself, and, invisible though it be, he feels he cannot escape it; and on this personality of his he must found his highest ideals.

There are those who may decry such anthropomorphic views and representations

of God as unworthy and jejune. But this is to forget what a little clear thinking would make abundantly evident, that science itself equally with religion must fall back upon and utilize anthropomorphic analogies. Much of our knowledge of external Nature is so grounded: force, motion, law, evolution, matter, weight, momentum, and such-like terms being all of them anthropomorphic. If 'no man hath seen God at any time,' it is equally true that no man has seen Nature at any time, whether as presented in scraps and partial glimpses of some outward things before our eyes or as *re*-presented to us again by science. We can only know it in part by reading something of ourself into its details, or attributing to it elements of our own personal being.

This is the process of what is called analogy, or a comparison of things in their inner relations, not in their outer resemblances. If, for example, we speak of a hill having a foot, who dreams of it having heel and toes? The foot is to the hill what the human foot is to the body. The resemblance stops there, and no one is misled. If we speak of the mind's eye, not even the most prosaic person thinks of its having iris, lens, or pupil. If a

scientific lecturer 'handles' the subject, say, of limestone, every one knows it is mental handling, and has no reference to physical manipulation.

To escape from such analogies, based on personality, would be to escape into illusion and dreamland, for there is no other way of rendering ideas vivid, impressive, or life-like. If we attribute to the invisible God the possession of eye, ear, or hand, who thinks of visible or material organs? We are but attributing to Him powers of seeing, hearing, acting, corresponding to, but not outwardly resembling, these physical or bodily organs of ours. Such representations, far from being derogatory to God, have always tended both to exalt Him and lift up man. For personality after all is the highest thing in us, and it is the framework of all our highest ideals. Every fibre in our personal nature cries aloud for the living God. In the very principle of gratitude, for instance, there resides a powerful witness to the Divine personality as well as to our own. If only a person can say, 'I thank,' only to a person can it be said. Gratitude cannot be displayed towards an abstraction, or a blind force, or a dumb law, or any other unresponsive object. Every exercise of it

demands not some *thing*, but some *one* on whom it may expend itself.

How foolish then the notion, 'We venture to think that religion may exist without belief in a God.'[1] Surely not, if religion mean grateful dependence. A man escapes in a railway catastrophe, because some wheel and axle did not break. He is devoutly thankful, but he cannot thank the wheel and axle, however grateful for the good fortune. To whom, then, may he express thanks? The courtesies of life require us to say 'Thank you' when we are conscious of a favour, and human nature knows how to characterize the unthankful. A man must either cease cultivating gratitude as a religious habit, or find a personal God as its object. Even Positivism cannot get rid of the idea, but is forced to personify 'collective humanity,' if it would address the *grand être*. So truly does the sense of our own personality demand no mere something, but a some one distinct from, but having relation and affinity with us, who knows and can be known, feels and can be felt, loves and can be loved, and into whose heart ours can throb. An abstract or impersonal deity is of no use here. As a

[1] J. S. Mill's *Comte and Positivism*, p. 133.

modern agnostic pathetically confesses, 'It excites in me no enthusiasm, commands from me no worship. I cannot pray to the "Immensities": I cannot give thanks to the "Eternities." They proffer me no help, vouchsafe no sympathy, and suggest no comfort.'

(iii) *The Personality of the Lord Jesus Christ.* That a man should be made a god and be deified and worshipped was a notion familiar enough in ancient heathendom. The same notion is reflected in Buddha's boast of having raised himself to godhead. But such confusions and metamorphoses are worlds asunder from the unique personality of the Lord Jesus—both God and Man, two whole perfect and distinct natures inseparably joined in one Person. No confusion or mingling of the two in any mixed way, as though God's nature got transformed into man's, or man's into God's: but the two natures united in the one personality, or *hypostasis.*

Our own personality, associated as it is with three natures, a material, an animal, and a spirit nature, throws light upon this great mystery—the unveiled secret—of godliness, God manifest in the flesh. This is Christ's own sublime claim—'He that hath seen

Me hath seen the Father.'[1] And this is humanity's sublimest honour, for 'the light of the knowledge of the glory of God is in the face [Hebraism for the person] of Jesus Christ.'[2]

So we may better realize why the New Testament writers never describe nor even refer to the bodily likeness of Jesus. Their aim was to convey to us the proper impression of His real Divine and human personality as it now is, which, not being a matter of the visible, could not be enhanced by portraiture of looks or appearance, of feature or form.

The sacred writers set no store by these things, however indelible their remembrance of them. They were led to adopt far higher methods of delineating and transmitting the endeared and immortal personality of their Divine Lord and Master. They had to convey and perpetuate this portrait for adoration, not through canvas or sculpture, but in hearts conscious of immediate living spiritual communion with His very self, and clinging to Him in the most sacred personal exercises of faith, hope, and love. For ages no one

[1] John xiv. 9.
[2] Cor. iv. 6.

ventured on any description of Christ's appearance, and so late as the fifth century Augustine declares that His real type of features was quite unknown.[1] The heathen who carried about with them images of their gods in cameos, rings, and amulets often said to the Christians disdainfully, 'Show us the likeness of Him you worship.' At first the Church was either too spiritual to desire such a thing, or too honest to allow it. But under pagan pressure, within as well as without, it gradually succumbed to the cry for fancied likenesses and counterfeit presentments, which issued at last in the prolonged struggle between the image-worshippers and the iconoclasts.

The struggle *began* over the question which of two types or ideals in representing Christ should have the preference—whether that suggested by Isaiah's words, 'His visage was more marred than any man,' or that of Psalm xlv., 'Thou art fairer than the children of men.' (For this conflict see Milman's *Latin Christianity*, i. 422.) The Apostolic Fathers—Clement, Barnabas, and Ignatius—are, like Scripture, wholly silent as to Christ's appearance; Justin Martyr and Tertullian prefer the suffering form; while the

[1] *De Trinitate*, chap. viii.

later Fathers—Origen, Jerome, Chrysostom, Ambrose—favour the other ideal. The superstition and tradition of mediæval art wrought along both lines; some desiring that the Godlike be represented in forms of physical beauty and honour, others in forms to meet the requirements of the vulgar, or the demands of a semi-paganized ecclesiasticism. Perhaps one good result of the Evangelists' furnishing no outward aid to art has been to train, exalt, and sanctify artistic gift and faculty, not just to supply any fancied likenesses, but to express, interpret, and emphasize some of the higher conceptions involved in the Saviour's real and unique personality.

Finally, we may the better be led to realize in some measure why Jesus did not prolong His stay visibly in the bosom of the Church, and why the outward manifestation of incarnate Deity, all-important as it is in itself, is not perpetuated on earth. In no such way can His personality in its fulness and significance be reached and enjoyed. Not through any avenue of sight or sense may He fulfil to us His own great promise—'I will manifest *Myself* unto you.'

The first disciples, however averse, ex-

tremely averse, from the thought of His disappearing, became thoroughly reconciled to it by the ample experience they soon had of the truth of His own considerate word: 'It is expedient *for you* that I go away.' This was the appeasing and reconciling assurance. For if He went away, it was but to come again to them, the same personality, though in higher state and condition; no longer a localized, but a universal Presence; no longer with them only, but in them; and none the less known and felt as real, albeit invisible; a growingly realized personality, as the grain hid in the soil reappears in living green or in ripening multiplied crop for larger use. How else may He come in the Spirit, and His personality be caught up into the religious consciousness of men? How else may a spiritual economy be inaugurated in association with His own great Name? How else may He put in operation the most effective leverage for lifting up the best interests of mankind, and call into play the mightiest religious forces that have ever moved the hearts, and lives, and consciences of men? Unspeakable the gain of Christ's invisibility; unspeakable the advantages to us of His pervasive personality. For how true it is,

however paradoxical, that the very invisibleness of the Saviour helps the better to disclose Him to our view, and hands over His personality in its entirety, with more directness and fulness, to the arms of our faith, our hope, and our love.

CHAPTER III

MORAL ORDER; OR, HUMAN NATURE AND THE INVISIBLE

Theistic and ethical faith is the indispensable basis and rationale of human life.—Prof. A. C. Fraser, *Philosophy of Theism.*

> Man hath all that Nature hath, and more,
> And in that *more* lies all his hopes of good.
>
> Matthew Arnold.

> He fixed thee 'mid this dance
> Of plastic circumstance;
> Machinery just meant
> To give thy soul its bent,
> Try thee and turn thee forth,
> Sufficiently impressed.
>
> Browning, *Rabbi Ben Ezra.*

The Gentiles which have not the law do by *nature* the things contained in the law.—*Rom.* ii. 14.

Doth not even *nature* itself teach you?—1 *Cor.* xi. 14.

CHAPTER III

MORAL ORDER; OR, HUMAN NATURE AND THE INVISIBLE

In the tumultuous tide of changing phenomena around him, man notices a certain fixed system or permanent background, to which he gives the name of Nature. Not that Nature has any subsistence apart from the phenomena man observes, but it is a convenient abstract name for the underlying uniformity which constitutes the physical or *natural order* on which we rely and for which we look.

But man is not less assured of a different and higher kind of order called *moral order*, which lies at the root of all Divine and human government. This, as being more closely allied to the invisible and less obtrusive to the senses, is more apt to have its reality and importance overlooked. The distinction, however, while deep and momentous, is a very

plain one, and easily apprehended. If a man intoxicate himself, there is a violation of natural order, attested in headache or similar physical distress, and this happens even if the act be unintentional. But if the act be wilful, there is a breach also of *moral order*, and this is witnessed not only by the physical hurt or bodily injury, but by the self-reproach, the sense of shame, the 'pain of guilt,' as Dr. Samuel Johnson pithily puts it. A man may palliate the offence, but *qui s'excuse s'accuse*, and he is self-convicted of having done not only bodily damage, but positive wrong and injustice to his moral nature. Should a tree in falling kill a man, no blame attaches to the tree. Should an animal kill a man, it is simply dispatched as dangerous. But should a man maliciously slay his fellow, he is tried on a criminal charge and condignly punished. And all this though in perpetrating the crime he has wholly conformed to the *physical* order of Nature, so that the death he caused was the natural outcome of the 'cosmic process' he adopted.

Human beings in all ages and in all stages of civilization have thus distinguished between a natural casualty and a deed of wilful or criminal violence. And why? Because—

(i) *There is an invisible moral order in man's nature itself.* For it is not more certain that man has a physical constitution than that he has a mental and moral one. That is to say, our invisible or inner nature is not a mere set of disconnected items, not a mob of unrelated elements without any bearing on one another: our nature is a system of constitutional adjustments, with powers of authority and subordination of parts, some of them made to rule and others to be ruled—a nature, moreover, with self-governing capabilities, not directed by mere physical forces from without, but with inward springs of self-regulative action. As having an animal nature we have the humble concrete intelligence associated with the physical life and organism of the lower creatures; like them we have sensation, perception, memory, and such understanding as can put this and that observation together, and draw simply concrete conclusions or inferences. We have also those impulsive and conative forces in common with them to which we give the name of instincts, appetites, passions, desires, emotions, affections, and the like.

But here we part company with them. For we have within us what they have not—a

system of personal self-government, which is our supreme distinction as human beings. It is well, of course, to note the resemblances between men and animals; but it is of more interest and moment to mark what are the differentiating qualities, or 'how much better a man is than a sheep.' He is not like the animal—an individual or one of a class only. He is a *person*, with the three great endowments which constitute personality. He has *Reason*, or the self-legislating capacity; *Conscience*, or the self-judging; and *Will*, or the self-administrating function; and these are three functions that agree in one, and that are essential to any conception of moral order.

Man is not only an intelligent being, but his is a *rational* intelligence, capable of self-knowledge and of turning this self-knowledge to account. He is capable, in short, of general ideas and of grasping general principles, and so is capable of discharging the self-legislative or the *enacting* function in his complex being. The rudiments of none of these rational elements are found in the lower creatures. An intelligent dog understands much of individual concrete objects, like chair, table, horse, tree; but speak to it of order, education, conduct, arithmetic, syntax, and the like—all matters

easily within the compass of schoolchildren's capacities—and its intelligence is a blank.

Now, it is this rational intelligence that gives man, though subject to natural order, a certain limited control and ascendancy over that order. We are not merely camped out in Nature, nor form simply a part of it. Every effort to resolve man into mere Nature has egregiously failed. For he has a life of experience wholly superior to it, not in degree only, but in kind. There is in us a something of *super*-natural quality. We can do for Nature what it cannot do for itself. We in part can understand and interpret it—nay, even in measure subdue and master it, though with all his boasted scientific accomplishments man has done wofully little in this way compared with what he might. For, as we shall see, his moral faults have weakened and misdirected his rational intelligence, and wasted it on unworthy and mistaken objects.

But it is through the conviction of his own superiority to Nature that man so easily grasps the conception of a Supernatural One transcendently greater than himself. In short, human nature contains in itself all physical nature, *with something over and above.* Man is not only the microcosm, the measure of

Nature, but the measurer of it as well. His insight and foresight furnish him with the knowledge that affords power and control. He knows himself not a mere part of Nature, not a mere instrument, but an agent; not a machine only, but a machinist, and inventor of and worker with machines. Not an artisan only, but a thinker, an architect, an engineer who can co-ordinate himself with Nature, and by acquiring its secrets and adopting its processes can change the face of it and modify plants and animals and other existences it supports.

But man is not only rational, he is an *ethical* intelligence. He not only can know realities as they *are* or *may* be, but he knows moral distinctions, or things as he thinks they *ought* to be. This 'ought' in our nature is the categoric imperative that gives the sense of accountability or responsibleness, and makes men realize that they are under not mere physical, but moral law and government. It is conscience which attests and points to such a moral law of our being which we cannot evade, and it sits as judge upon our doings. Conscience exercises the judicial function in the moral order of our invisible being, whereby we sit in judgment on ourselves and

on our motives or acts of will. This is that power or endowment at the heart of our moral constitution which testifies to, interprets, and applies the supreme moral law of our being that exists outside and above us, and which brings that law to bear, however inexactly, as an acknowledged authoritative standard whenever we take cognizance of our hidden selves.

Whether, as it now discharges its functions, it is a debauched, corrupt, blind, and prejudiced judge is a painful question too easily determined. But its very existence does witness to the reality at least of moral order, however warped it may be in its judgments thereon. We have good occasion to conclude that, while we can hardly think too highly of the nature with which we are endowed, we can hardly think too humbly of the miserable and disordered state into which it has fallen. If there is a glory in man's real nature, there is a tragedy in its present condition. Still, conscience is the seat of our ideals of life, conduct, and character; of the conviction of a right and a wrong, however falsely it may determine *what* things are right and what are wrong; of the recognition of duty and obligation, sustained by solemn and authoritative

sanctions; and of a certain wrath-principle or heat of righteous indignation, fiercest in the best, against wilful evil-doing — a kind of 'electric battery moral' available to stun and paralyse ourselves or others who may be perpetrators of conscious wrong, or wilful violators of moral order.

Strip human nature of this, and you reduce it to mere paste or pulp; or, what is worse, you drag it down to the low level of mere fiery or brute passion against enemies and tormentors only, with no attempt at avenging wickedness or securing beneficent redress through principled acts of justice. No doubt, with our fiery and unregulated passions we need to be careful how we carry this naked light in a fiery atmosphere of personal revenge, and we must ever keep the gauze of conscientious principle over it, like that of a miner's safety lamp, to prevent explosions. Yet government without this fence and defence of moral order were no government at all.

Thus even conscience needs the control of the *will*, whose place it is to insist on thought and deliberation before any act of choice. Its betrayal of this trust is but too painfully evinced in universal experience. And if there

is anything worse than a corrupt conscience, it is a perverted will. What a power is involved in the possession of will! And what a power for evil is a treacherous and disloyal will, where mob passions and propensities have gained the upper hand! What but Divine energy renovating the very will itself, and giving it a new bent and fresh start, can guarantee that successful counter-working and resentment of rebellion and confusion which shall plant once more the love of moral order in the topmost place, again to sway our being?

Man knows the better, but, alas! he will choose the worse. There is a schism in his being. He recognizes and approves the good, but fails to perform it. He disapproves a wickedness, and yet rushes to commit it. Excellence is lauded, yet avoided; sin is condemned, and yet cherished. *Virtus laudatur et alget.* And man is conscious everywhere that he is himself the culprit.

> Look up to heaven! the industrious sun
> Already half its race has run:
> It cannot halt nor go astray;
> But man with his free spirit *may*.

And such being man's nature and its state, he finds physical laws and processes will not

suffice for him. He neither can nor dare attempt to live without some other and higher order than the natural or physical. He everywhere betakes himself to some kind of ethically constituted law and order, corresponding to what he finds within. It is not open to any one who would come in contact with his fellows to choose whether natural law will suffice—that is, whether men shall live just like wild beasts in savage anarchy and isolation, or merely herd gregariously like oxen, deer, or sheep for self-protection. They must have some law and authority on *an ethical basis.* This is inextricably bound up with human life and history, exceptions only proving the rule; so that men and government go together, and these have a history and phenomena of vast moment wholly diverse from the play of physical nature or material sequences. No agnostic or materialistic theory has ever bridged the gulf of difference thus disclosed, nor by any reasonable theory joined the two into one coherent or intelligible unity. It can only ask in blind bewilderment the desperate question, 'If rational, ethical, volitional man is not the result of natural evolution or cosmic processes, of what is he the result?'—as if natural or cosmical processes gave any, even the

slightest, evidences whatever of exercising the personal functions—rational, ethical, or volitional—that are necessarily employed in the very idea of moral order! It is the fact that no *materialistic* scheme or form of evolution has yet succeeded in framing a coherent unity of physical and moral order. The miracles required by such a scheme cast all others into the shade; and yet the very object of it is to get rid of miracles altogether! A merely materialistic hypothesis requires us to believe that life sprang from processes of dead matter and quietly rose out of that grave, although no such phenomenon occurs now, and we have no evidence or experience of life save as coming from previous life. It requires us to conceive of rational intelligence emerging from blind, unintelligent forces! And, most desperate of all, it requires us to think of moral order just *coming out* of a previous non-moral condition. No wonder the best and ablest of agnostics should be found lapsing into such hopeless self-contradictions as these: 'The ethical process must bear *some sort of relation* to the cosmic'; and yet he also says, 'The ethical process bears *no sort of relation* to the cosmical process'; and he is forced to denounce what he calls 'the unfathomable injustice of

the nature of things.'[1] No promise of unity or co-ordination of the physical and moral *there* at any rate.

(ii) But besides the invisible moral order in man's own nature, there is manifested to us also *an invisible moral order above man.*

We may not forget, though we are too apt to overlook, that we are as dependent on moral ordinances as on physical and organic laws. It is easy to demonstrate that we are living under an invisible yet constantly operating retributive economy. That the highest sanctions of moral law are being constantly enforced even here and now is beyond the power of gainsaying.

> We still have judgment here. And what we do of ill,
> Being done, returns to plague the inventor.
> Such even-handed justice still commends
> The ingredients of our poison chalice to our own lips

Not that every wickedness receives presently its full recompense. This is not necessary to our assurance of moral order.

[1] Huxley, *Evolution of Ethics,* pp. 8, 12, 23. The term *evolution* may be made to cover a great variety of views. It may be simply a method or process of the working of natural causes on living organisms, and may be quite compatible with a Theistic origin and government of things, though not designedly so. On the other hand, it may be the name for theories expressly designed to get rid of Theism altogether. But in either case it *assumes a something previously existing* (without necessarily endeavouring to account for it) in which the evolutionary process is found operating, whether by 'natural selection' or any other ways.

For penalty is not an act only, but a process; and penal sanctions are vindicated, though final adjustments be postponed. Civil order is demonstrated by courts of law habitually at work and by trials habitually going on, even while many crimes are never brought to light and many criminals escape punishment. But entire impunity in wrong is a vain thought. We reap as we sow. And therefore to sow acts is to reap habits, to sow habits is to reap a character, and to sow a character is to reap a destiny. And there are no favoured people, in the sense of any being exempt from the operations of the Divine principles of moral government and its solemn sanctions. For moral order may be effectively at work even in the midst of constant efforts to oppose and thwart it. Thus, much moral disorder and confusion may be perfectly compatible with a constant and sleepless operation of moral order quite unseen by many who are subject to it, though for such wilful blindness they may be without excuse. 'For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold down the truth in unrighteousness; because that which may be known of God is manifest in them.'[1]

[1] Rom. i. 18, 19.

This is a great factor in human life. For man's history is not the mere sum of his own thoughts and doings, any more than a web is the sum of the weft threads that shoot across its range. There are also the long and slowly unwinding warp threads as well to bind the others together in one compact whole. How else could the diverse lines of human activity and of distant generations be knit into one orderly piece or pattern? Or is this earth's history to be conceived of as one blind, purposeless set of unrelated movements without meaning or object? *Credat Judæus Apella!* Hence those great results in human affairs that never entered into human calculations or designs at all; and hence from trivial doings have come forth mighty issues never contemplated by the original agents! Like the resistless ground swell that absorbs and engulfs the tossing waves, what giant movements and upheavals transpire among men's doings beyond their power either to originate or control!

> And that should teach us
> There's a Divinity that shapes our ends,
> Rough-hew them how we will.

Three ideas are involved in the working of a Divine moral order. It is based on law, it operates through judicial processes, and it is

enforced by executive authority. These three functions, the legislative, the judicial, and the executive, are embodied in moral order and in every advanced form of modern government. Law stands first, and is the primary element in moral order. Properly speaking, law is what is laid down by competent authority and enforced by penalty for non-observance. 'Law,' says Edmund Burke, 'is beneficence acting by rule and backed by authority.' Or, as defined by a leading modern jurist,[1] it is 'Command issued by superior authority and enforced by sanction or penalty.' Thus a state of law is a state of order, as distinguished from caprice, anarchy, or confusion. 'Of Law,' says the judicious Hooker, 'there can be no less acknowledged than that her seat is in the bosom of God: her voice the harmony of the world: all things in heaven and earth do her homage, the very least, as feeling her care, and the greatest, as not exempted from her power.'[2]

Laws being thus the expression of will, cannot enforce themselves, but must be carried into execution by some enacting will. Law is not a self-working force. It becomes so only when judicially applied and effectively

[1] John Austin. [2] *Eccles. Polity,* Bk. I.

administered. Law is a method of observed order, and is a product of what is already in being, and never a self-originating or self-acting energy. Hence the statutes of a nation, the bye-laws of a city, the regulations of a family, when they are in force, are laws properly so called. But often when we speak of laws of Nature we speak but metaphorically. For sometimes by laws of Nature we mean the *properties* or qualities of matter, sometimes the *relations* of qualities or elements, and sometimes just *generalized facts* as we observe them, with no analogy to laws proper, except the fixed, orderly uniformity which we reasonably expect and on which we feel we have good cause to rely.

Owing to this diversity of meanings, we find people assuring themselves that the laws of Nature cannot be broken—which is true of some—and that, on the other hand, they can be broken—which is true of others, where laws have a different signification or reference, and where breaches of them are followed by suffering, misfortune, disease, and other evils. But moral law is the expression of the Divine will on its ethical side. This is law in a far higher sense than other laws, such as those of astronomy or chemistry: which

might have been quite different from what they are, because the physical world might have been made quite differently from what it is.

But moral law, as the expression of the Divine will, is the express image of the Divine character. And so moral order, being the order of God's own nature and character, is eternal and unchangeable. This is emphatically *the* law of God—the law that governs Himself, and that is applied in its own measure to His responsible creatures. 'Oh, how I love *Thy* law: it is my meditation all the day.' Those who know themselves to be under it must each one devoutly pray, 'Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of *Thy* law.' For this is peculiarly the personal law, determining each one in his personal duties and relations. It is the basis of what we call statutes, judgments, testimonies, commandments, and the like. To see law itself, we need only a clear and capable intelligence. But to see God in law needs spiritual discernment. For this is one of the things of the spirit which can only be spiritually discerned. Neither bodily nor intellectual vision can attain to it. Happily for us, there is a sure way to descry that. 'The Lord is our judge, the Lord is

our lawgiver, the Lord is our King; He will save us.'[1]

(iii) *A remedial, restorative economy is at work in moral order.* From the very first start of sin and disorder a redemptive economy of grace began. A special operation of Providence was at work to deliver man out of his estate of miserable anarchy into the peace and liberty which he had forfeited. What mercy and respite came into play! Destruction was held back and desolation stayed! How much there was ever to show that if mankind sinners were cast out, they were not cast off: a race fallen, but not abandoned; not forgotten nor forsaken, if not without offence and blame; commiserated, though not approved.

But why the presence of such sin and misery at all? Under a perfectly strong and beneficent government, how can such evil and wretchedness be produced? Why were they not prevented altogether? Surely (it has been argued) God would have prevented them if He could; and if He could not, where was His omnipotence? Surely He is not Love, or He has not omnipotence? But this is no true dilemma. To *be* Love and to *have* omnipotence is to use words which imply a

[1] Isa. xxxiii. 22.

false balance, a kind of contrasted things that cannot be weighed in equal scales. God is Almighty, but, with all reverence be it said, He *is not* almighti*ness*. Omnipotence is an attribute only, and involves no power whatever of doing evil or of working self-contradictions.

We may not fall into the elementary mistake of regarding either sin or misery as directly in any sense God's creation, or as things done by Him. Sin is a perversion and rebellion of created will in the misdirection of its own power; and misery is no fruit of law and order, but entirely the reverse. Like lawlessness and penalty under human government, they find a place and are made subservient to high ends within the Divine plan of moral order.

For He Whom we worship as the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is no far-off contriver of a world to whose sin and suffering He is indifferent. He is not a mere neutral or aloof spectator here. If His offending and dependent creatures suffer, did He shrink from sacrifice and suffering on their behalf? If those who are relatively innocent are involved with those who are more guilty, was not He Who became the Great Sufferer for others wholly innocent Himself? If suffering be ofttimes a *mystery of iniquity*, as when

'man's inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn,' is there not more frequent and abiding evidence of a noble and ennobling suffering that is altogether a *mystery of love*? In that alembic, how curse is transmuted into blessing, loss into gain, evil into good, and sorrow into more abundant joy! Milton found truer sight by very means of blindness.

> My vision Thou hast dimmed, that I might see
> Thyself, Thyself alone.

And over how many a pitiful experience have the words of Joseph to his brethren been verified, 'As for you, ye meant evil against me, but God meant it unto good, to save much people alive'! Joseph Addison illustrates the same thing by his fine allegory of 'The Golden Scales'—the weight which on the one side bore the inscription, 'In the dialect of earth, *Calamity!*' bore on the opposite side of the balance, 'In the dialect of heaven, "*Blessing in disguise.*"'

As there is lodged in the executive or administrative authority of even human government a prerogative of grace and mercy, a mediating and restorative function, we may much more expect at the heart of the Divine order of things a gospel message of hope and

assurance like this: 'The Lord is *our King*, *He will save us*.' And such a redemptive economy we do find at work within the operations of a gracious Providence, and such an economy as 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath entered into the heart of man to conceive.' For in the Cross of Christ, which was the very climax of all human wickedness, God hath found the most effective means of cancelling sin and for breaking its power. The depths of deepest malice serve but to reveal more clearly the heights of divinest mercy and grace; for there 'grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life.'

'And so,' as an old Puritan says, 'albeit the actors in Christ's death wickedly intended nothing but to show hatred and envy, yet God brought another matter out of their wickedness. For while He would have Christ die, and so would Caiaphas, Pilate, Judas, and the Jews, yet He for our redemption, and they for their own ends, as Judas for covetousness, the priests for malice, and Pilate to please the people who were inflamed at Jesus not fulfilling their political hopes.' And what wonderful adaptations to so many and such diverse ends we descry in that Cross of Christ! Like the atmo-

sphere which serves a thousand different purposes—forming a soft elastic cushion to protect the earth as it rushes through space at eleven hundred miles a minute, and, while ministering alike to the lungs of man and beast and to the requirements of vegetable life, is at once a highway for cloud and breeze, for rain and electric flow, and a vehicle of light and heat, of sound and colour—yet not less but more varied are the objects gained by God's economy of grace and redemption, working through righteousness unto eternal life!

Here is something to cast down the pride of man, yet lift him up out of the depths of despondency and despair! Something to bring home to him how badly he has deserved at the hand of God, yet to inspire him with fresh love, and hope, and trust in Him! Here a moral order is maintained and honoured, while yet our eyes are opened, our conscience pacified, our will renewed, our heart satisfied, and our nature restored. Above all, God is therein held forth in His true light as both 'a just God *and* a Saviour, faithful and just in forgiving sin, and in cleansing us from all unrighteousness.'

CHAPTER IV

RELIGIOUS ORDER; OR, SPIRITUAL FAITH AND THE INVISIBLE

He fought his doubts, and gathered strength,
He would not make his judgment blind,
He faced the spectres of the mind,
And laid them: thus he came at length
To find a stronger faith his own.

TENNYSON.

Faith and Unfaith can ne'er be equal powers.

Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast *seen* Me, thou hast *believed*.—*John* xx. 29.

CHAPTER IV

RELIGIOUS ORDER; OR, SPIRITUAL FAITH AND THE INVISIBLE

(i) To illustrate the working of Christian faith in the realm of the invisible, and the bearing of this upon the spiritual order of things, we take the case of Thomas, the doubting disciple, both as a caution and as an example.

The name Thomas or Didymus (that is, Twin) is a fine symbol for the character of the man Thomas.

If we read his idiosyncrasy aright, there was in him a special sort of twin-nature: both a masculine and a feminine element; a keen intellect combined with a tender and delicate susceptibility, not often found together, save in exceptionally gifted souls. For Thomas was not a hard and cold being, like many in whom the critical faculty predominates. There are those in whom emotion is stronger than their understanding, who are led by feeling more

than by thinking, and simple even to credulity—ready to believe to the verge of superstition ; on the other hand, there are some whose reflective powers are much greater than their emotional nature, and who are apt to be somewhat apathetic therefore, or aloof in their attachments. To neither of these classes does Thomas belong, or rather he combines both of them in himself in rare and unusual proportions.

For some are endowed with a mental constitution so peculiar that they are impelled by an uneasy, inquisitive intellect to search into any subject that presents itself, and they can show no enthusiasm or warmth of feeling till this impulse be satisfied, but being satisfied there follows a perfect glow of warm emotion and fervid enthusiasm. Thomas was of this kind. What a mistake to think or speak of him as but

> A smooth-rubbed soul to which could cling
> No form of feeling, great or small :
> A reasoning, self-sufficing thing,
> An intellectual all-in-all.

This were wholly to misunderstand him. For if, when Jesus said, ' Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know,' Thomas, with his rigorous logic, replies, ' We know not whither Thou goest, and how can we know the way ? ' we

ought also to remember that when the disciples were dissuading Jesus from venturing to Jerusalem, saying, 'The Jews of late have sought to stone Thee, and goest Thou thither again?' it was Thomas who, under intense feeling, broke forth in terms of the most passionate devotion, 'Let us go with Him, that we may die with Him.'

Antecedently we might have supposed that this was the utterance of the impetuous Peter. But no: it is that of the critically disposed, but now convinced and fervid Thomas, who could glow like Peter with the most ardent and leal-hearted attachment to the Master. So, too, it was the dubious, questioning Thomas who had said, 'Except I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe;' he it was who rose at one bound into the most exaltedly spiritual, adoringly trustful, and personally confessing and appropriating faith—'My Lord and my God!' What eyesight, or which of his senses, or all of them together, could have taught him that, or raised him to such a pitch of elevated thought and emotion?

Thomas is usually and fitly enough called the incredulous or doubting disciple. When

exultantly told by his fellow disciples that Jesus was risen from the dead, and that they had seen Him, he had, in a moody and morbid, perhaps also an irritated and piqued state of feeling, testily affirmed his disbelief until he could have the direct evidence of his senses. In this respect he is a warning and a caution to all doubters; but in recoiling as he did from this untenable position as soon as he saw it was untenable, he is a brilliant example of the way of faith.

(ii) *The doubting disciple is a caution and a warning.* His position was this: No testimony will satisfy him except the evidence of his own senses. His two eyes will be of more worth than the iterated and doubly iterated testimony of others whom he could otherwise most heartily trust. His own ten fingers he can more rely on than on all the witness-bearing of his ten fellow apostles, whom nevertheless he did not imagine willing to deceive.

We can do honour to this spirit of independence; and we shall see presently the value of his doubting, to which Jesus Himself pays no small respect. But Thomas is none the less the victim of a fallacy, or subtle sophistry, by which so many are oftentimes

deluded, and which Jesus here takes occasion to expose. The sophistry is that sight and sense are the surest guarantees of knowledge, and that a measure of suspicion rightly attaches to all evidence save that of the senses. How gross the assumption, and yet how many acute but suspicious minds fall under its delusive spell! The evidence of sight is no doubt the most impressive of all evidences, and much of our primary knowledge comes originally through that channel. But impressive and certain are not synonymous terms. Evidence of our eyesight is irresistible, and, as people say, 'Seeing is believing.' But is that form or ground of belief always the safest? And is the result always the truest?

No doubt it is always easier to trust our eyesight; but, like all the senses, it needs correctives. The eye itself would have us believe that the heavenly bodies are but lamps of various sizes hung up in the azure vault of heaven. And in a solar eclipse the moon seems to pass just immediately in front of the sun, which is, however, scores of millions of miles farther away. What a tremendous struggle had to go on with sight and sense before the Copernican system could supplant the Ptolemaic! It gained its triumph by a

set of reasoned evidences apart from the sight and sense altogether. Not that our senses do themselves deceive us. It is our misreading of their testimony, and the mistaken conclusions we are apt to draw. One sense is needed to correct the other, and all of them together need the adjusting care of other evidence that may be as sure at least as that of the senses, if not so immediate, vivid, or irresistible.

Is nothing to be held sufficiently sure and proved till it can be submitted actually to the senses? Must a man be more certain he has a hand which he sees than a brain which he cannot, or at least never does see? Are we not to believe in sounds or smells till they become visible? Are not the mightiest forces and processes of even the material universe just those that elude all tests of outward sight and observation? The dark rays of the solar spectrum, though *known* to be charged with intense chemical potencies, are wholly invisible. The mysterious X-rays and the most fatal microbes yield nothing to the gazing eye, however fortified by microscopic helps. The diatoms both of diseases and therapeutics contain secrets that belong wholly to the invisible. Are not the most potent

forces and ideas that stir nations to their depths among the most invisible of influences, that can only be discerned in their issues and results?

But because sight affords the most vivid and impressive evidence, it is natural for us to crave for it, and to fall back upon it whenever it can be had. This, however, is very different from Thomas's hasty and ill-advised resolution—that he will accept no other evidence as sufficient or satisfactory. We are all entitled to say we will not believe anything without suitable and adequate evidence; but none may, without greatest presumption, insist on or stipulate for some particular kind of proof, and declare that they will attend to no other. This is a spirit to be in the highest degree reprobated, as both false in itself and extremely dangerous. It would be a death-blow to ordinary jurisprudence, and to many of the common principles and maxims on which all men find it safe to act. It would justify a juryman in declining to convict a man of theft or other crime because he had not himself seen him commit the act. It were to play fast and loose with truth and reality, to refuse to look at the evidence there is, because it is not

the kind we desire, nor the easiest for ourselves to consider. To so mistaken and mischievous a notion Jesus here shows no quarter.

But there is something better about Thomas to which Jesus pays respect, apart from this intellectual but pardonable lapse of his. Whether Thomas fell into it from wounded vanity, because others had been privileged with a sight of the risen Master and he had not; or whether it proceeded from the suspicious, over-cautious, and brooding spirit of the man, or however else it arose, we have not sufficient means of determining. To all appearance the doubting of Thomas was the almost inevitable hesitation of a constitutionally cautious and exact mind. There is, of course, a doubting which springs from wilful disregard and disobedience to conscience or a sense of known and felt duty. And then, as the Chinese proverb has it, '*Heaven's light cannot shine into an inverted bowl.*' There is, however, enough to show that Thomas's faith was right and sound, and his whole attitude safe and satisfactory from a moral point of view, however mistaken he was in his intellectual notion. Not without blame for his hasty and ill-advised position, and subjected to mild but effective

rebuke for entertaining so false an idea, he yet received the proffer of the favour he coveted, and of which he made such noble use. 'Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands, reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side, and be not faithless, but believing.'

(iii) *The doubting disciple is an example or illustration of the way of faith.* For there was in Thomas a loftier reach than that of intellectual notionalism. He had the disposition to walk humbly by faith, and not merely by sight. He knew he had within himself some proclivity higher than either animal instincts or than mere intellectual or speculative inquisitiveness. And 'he followed the gleam' faithfully. He cherished in his soul a high and true principle, which Jesus delighted to recognize and commend, to which He pays regard and makes fitting appeal. Blameworthy though he were, his was a kind of doubt which at once rebukes the unconscionable dogmatist and the no less unconscionable indifferentist. He was faithful not only to his rational convictions, not only to his reason, but to his conscience. His doubt did not spring either from moral faithlessness, or from graceless, proud, or captious intellectualism, as in so many cases of so-called doubt

which finds its origin in one or other, sometimes in both, of these evil sources.

Real doubt is neither the opposite of belief nor of unbelief, but rather a mixture of both. What we think worthy of credence we believe, and what we think unworthy of credence we disbelieve, and what we think neither one nor the other we doubt. The line between belief and disbelief is, therefore, like a mathematical line—length without breadth; so that doubt has no standing ground of its own. It has to keep hovering on either side of the dividing line between belief and unbelief, sometimes more on this side, sometimes more on that. Real doubt is always, and must always, therefore, be an anxious and painful state of mind, especially wherever important issues are realized as being at stake. For it is a condition of mental suspense—an unhappy and uncomfortable state from which every sincere and honest doubter will seek, must seek, speedy relief.

A state of religious or other professed doubt may, of course, be insincere and little different from veiled unbelief—a veritable cloak for undevout scepticism. That Thomas's doubts were of an altogether opposite cast is manifest from his whole spirit and conduct. His higher conscience—his religious conscience—his con-

science toward God, controlled and guided his whole behaviour, and so what was mistaken or misleading in his intellectual notion was kept in proper check. Nothing is more misleading than a guileful pride of intellect, though an independent mind is very different from a boastful and self-sufficient temper.

His doubts did not lead him, nor would they have warrantably allowed him, to cast off the restraints or the duties of religion. Whatever may have caused his absence from the first religious gathering of his brethren, he was present on the second occasion. 'After eight days, again His disciples were within, and Thomas with them.' Real doubt is not cool neutrality, nor careless indifference. It is a man's conscience, not his doubts, however conscientious, that should ever control or dictate to his determinations. Anxious for light, and keenly solicitous for the real truth, Thomas haunts the sphere where he thinks it most likely to be found, and does not cut himself off from godly fellowship or the exercises of devotion.

Blame the apostle as we may, he cannot be charged with guileful aversion either to the truth, or to any discipline of holiness that might bring him evidence. It is wholly to

his credit that his doubt is his burden, as all serious and honest doubt must be. His spirit is serious, not frivolous; ingenuous, not captious. And what a sense of grave responsibility his whole behaviour breathes!

So his doubting rebukes two evils that have so often afflicted and done inconceivable damage to the Church: easy-going and unworthy credulity on the one hand, and no less easy-going and mischievously pretended or conventional profession of faith without the reality on the other.

How deadly, how spiritually deadening are they both! As to the former, what corruptions have been bred from a disposition to be credulous or too facile in acceding to what in religious matters may be imposed by external authority, or that some current yet false fashion may dictate, without the trouble of personal inquiry. We may be too free of faith, too ready to yield to human authority in religion, rather than obey the Divine voice, and attend to the *Cor Dei in verbo Dei.* It is this faithlessness to the things of faith that has often proved little less injurious than unbelief itself, and that has led to the overloading of primitive Christianity with corrupt traditions, superstitious observances, and un-

warrantable dogmas that have sunk large sections of the Church into pagan usages or degrading apostasies.

Jesus is no patron of any blind or unintelligent faith. He ever respects the laws of evidence, knowing how an ill-grounded faith breeds rationalistic reaction that issues in no faith at all. On the other hand, a mere pretending to believe, or a mere outward compliance with a prevailing profession of faith, which is not of conviction at all, how deadening the influence of such insincerity! Had there been more of ingenuous doubting, like Thomas's, how much more free the Church would have been of hypocrisy and barrenness! Not that this would result from mere doubt, but only from the working of a Thomas-like spirit. Though operating as a safeguard against deception or mistake, a mere spirit of doubting may of itself be as baleful in its influence as it is unhappy in the experience.

Like the whetstone that wears the blade it sharpens, doubt is apt to exhaust faith in giving it edge; or, like rust on a lancet, it may introduce an irritating virus into the sore which it opens, and so may as easily inflame as heal. If we may not denounce it, we may not glorify it. To be submitted to rather than

honoured ; to be got rid of rather than praised or cherished, it is at best a painful medicine, whose remedial power depends on the Thomas-like spirit and disposition in which it is used and turned to sanctified account. One evil with many is that, while nominally believing, they cannot be got to think, and brought the length of even honest and ingenuous doubting. Otherwise they might attain to a well-grounded faith, and acquire for themselves the high encomium : 'Thomas, thou hast believed.' True, the doubting disciple stood reproved and rebuked : 'Thomas, because thou hast seen Me thou hast believed.' Yet he revealed that blessed faith which at once pierced down to the bedrock of reality and soared up into the highest heaven of conviction—not mere conviction of a fact, momentous as Christ's resurrection was, but direct, adoring, and dauntless trust in a Person.

This believing in Jesus is not a mere believing that He is, but that He is what He holds Himself out to be, or what He declares Himself that He is. This is the faith that cannot come through the avenue of the senses, but is grounded on other evidence altogether, for seeing Jesus was not believing on Him ; a faith that grasps what in Him can never be

outwardly seen, and derives from Him what far transcends any reach of bodily vision. It is not by just seeing a man we believe in him. The grossest insult to any man is, while looking at him, to say, 'I do not believe in you; I have not faith in you; I do not trust you.' By other evidence than sight is such faith or believing to be attained, and by far other considerations must it be reached.

Thrice blessed is this faith of Didymus—a blessedness that is not the reward of lofty intellect, but of a good conscience and a humble heart. How much knowledge and certainty may be reached as the reward of sterling integrity! Such realities are often 'hidden from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto babes!' For, after all, it is 'with the heart man believeth unto righteousness.' Motive and disposition count for something here, and not mere logic or learning or elaborated argument. For it is 'out of the *heart*' that there are 'the issues of life.'

PART II

CHRIST INVISIBLE OUR GAIN

CHAPTER I

GAIN IN TRAINING THE FIRST DISCIPLES

The further limits of our being, it seems to me, plunge into altogether other dimensions of existence than that of the outer world . . . name it the mystical or supernatural or what you please. But we belong to it in a more intimate sense than we do to the visible world.—Prof. William James.

Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more; but ye see Me. . . . Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. . . . Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away.—*John* xiv. 19, 28; xvi. 7.

CHAPTER I

GAIN IN TRAINING THE FIRST DISCIPLES

(i) *The Lord Jesus is about to leave His disciples.* The hour of sad and solemn farewell is come, with its disruption of old ties, snapping asunder of tender cords, and parting of the former endeared fellowship. They had now to leave behind them the gentle clinging of the outward human attitude toward their Master, and had to adopt the more robust attitude of a self-sustaining spiritual faith. A crisis was at hand, and great changes were impending. They had reached a new and important stage in their religious development, midway between childhood and full-grown manhood. Hitherto they had been little more than babes in Christ; now they must be still further weaned from much wherein they had been but too willing to rest.

The time for a more spiritual upheaval, a more invigorating struggle, had now come,

and, as usual, it was to come by way of trial and privation. As when 'the eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh and beareth them on her wings,' so their Lord and Master is about to subject His loved disciples to a new process of discipline and training.

However much they shrank from it, the ordeal was to prove to them more than a blessing in disguise. Like the breaking up of a happy home, this outward leaving of them on the part of their Master was to be attended by most glorious results, and they were to find in it, singularly enough, the most divinely suitable adaptations to their circumstances and needs. They should in due time learn even to rejoice and glory in it, as something, however hard, yet to be attended with greatest spiritual gain.

Their Master's going away was to exert a remarkably fresh and beneficial effect on their whole higher nature, and lead to a wonderful heightening, deepening, broadening, and general enlargement of their whole religious being and experience. It would brace up the fibre of their mental, moral, and spiritual character; and by making outward sight give

way to inward vision, it would remove some of the scales and film from their spiritual eye and furnish them with a larger outlook by means of that method of highest knowledge which we call faith. The world has never yet done full justice to the value of faith as a method and instrument of true knowledge —the knowledge, that is to say, of abiding and eternal realities as distinct from the merely outward, the phenomenal, the transient, and superficial.

(ii) *The change in these disciples* in the space of but a few brief weeks *was something marvellous*, and quite preternatural. They could hardly be identified as the same men. Not that the mere privation of their Master's bodily presence, nor that the mere sense of His disappearance from their midst was the cause of such a change in them. The cause lay far deeper, but the privation afforded occasion for the startlingly sudden development of their spiritual stature.

Coincident with their Master's disappearance and with the wrench that went to the very roots of their being, a rapid process was going forward which drove them away down into deeper soil than that of the earthly and visible This duly developed in them a

surprisingly new growth of experience, accompanied by a fresh access of stability and maturity to their spiritual manhood. Not that they could yet understand or acquiesce in the need of their Master's withdrawal either temporarily or permanently. Not till they have passed beyond the chill shadows of the cross and the sepulchre, not till they stand in the sunshine of the resurrection and ascension, not till they come to their new Pentecostal experiences, shall they be able to see, and know, and feel, and allow that the sunset of His bodily withdrawal, far from what they once dreaded it might be, a final eclipse of His presence, should but herald the sunrise of brighter and more assured evidence of His actually being in them and with them of a truth, and to an extent far beyond what they had ever previously conceived.

(iii) Meanwhile they are *cast into a state of great perplexity and trouble.* They had paid little heed to the previously often repeated intimations of His departure from them. And, whatever may have been their surmises about His 'going to the Father,' this last affecting interview did much to dissipate their former fondly cherished day-dreams of a great outward triumph, or of

their own sitting in grandeur upon great worldly thrones. These notions were fading into mist and nothingness. They saw a horror of great darkness descend upon their Master and enwrap even His spirit in its dismal folds. And though He spake with calm assurance of a joy and a glory beyond, they were appalled at the sight of His beginning to wrestle and agonize with a mysterious woe that darkens and clouds His own mind, and fills theirs with fear and foreboding.

(iv) *Two things soothe and solace them.*

First, His manifest and extreme solicitude for their highest good and their best interests. The tenderness of His tone lightens their trouble and helps to assuage their grief and fear. How wonderful His fortitude, how reassuring His calm, dignified, majestic superiority to what is so painfully exercising His own spirit! He forgets Himself in them. As if they were the chief or only sufferers, He engrosses Himself with their troubles and their anxieties, striving to disarm their fears and soothe their sorrows with His own wise and self-forgetting compassion. Again, it was comforting to have His sacred and solemnly reiterated assurance

that it was *for their sakes* He was going away, and that His departure would in many ways eventuate in untold advantage to themselves. Though they were in no mood to appreciate this at present, it was a great thing to have His solemn assurance that it would be so. He had never deceived them, and He had never been Himself deceived or mistaken. Now He gives them this assurance on oath as it were. 'Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; It is expedient *for you* that I go away.' For no pleasure to Himself, but for profit for them! What an appeasing consideration! True, they cannot yet *understand* how such a loss was to turn out a gain. But they can readily *believe* it, or at least wish to do so. They have His word for it, and on that they can implicitly rely, even when they are aware they cannot fully grasp its meaning. *How* the good was to come they can, as yet, by no means imagine, but *that* it was to be they could in some dim measure believe.

He had been leading them to associate His disappearance with a great and notable boon He could not otherwise secure for them, and they could not otherwise profit by and enjoy. This is the *second* great alleviating considera-

tion that should afford comfort and support to their depressed hearts. 'If I go not away, the Comforter will not come; but if I go away, I will send Him unto you.' Doubtless. But is not this very explanation a dark enigma to their unenlightened minds? They are yet ignorant of the matchless need and preciousness of His promised gift of the Paraclete, to whose coming the Master attaches such supreme importance. It is like some words from a comparatively unknown tongue. They can spell them out and even pronounce them. But their meaning and weighty significance they cannot grasp, till some one translates and interprets them. 'Ye cannot bear them now.' The Holy Ghost will teach you them Himself. And what an assurance it is that, even apart from this more immediate, direct, and spiritual instruction, Christ's very invisibleness will help them to *know* Him better than they did now: to get *nearer to Him*, so as to *possess* Him more fully and be possessed by Him: and also to do Him much higher and more valuable *service*.

(v) Their gain: (α) Christ's invisibleness would help them to *know Him better both in His personality and in His true position*. Hitherto they had recognized Him as their national and promised Messiah, and this seems the highest

conception to which they had attained. They clung to Him as their best and dearest friend, their help and hope, their teacher sent from God, divinely qualified, equipped, and approved by signs and wonders and heavenly miracles. But they had yet to learn to bring Him into the sphere of their *worship*, and to know that His personality must be made to mingle with all their *religious* thoughts, feelings, and exercises, and be the chief object and medium of their adoring homage, of their spiritual faith and hope and love—the one point of union between the nature of God and the nature of man; the meeting-place of finite and infinite, the Divine and human; the shrine of the eternal in association with mortal clay; the Godhead being connected with and standing forth revealed under human conditions and by means of human activities; the only complete and harmonious manifestation of Divine excellence and human virtue in unmixed and flawless unity.

How hampering to them from this point of view was Christ's outward physical presence! How difficult to honour and worship Him, save in the spirit of superstitious homage or idolatry, Whom they saw in material human form, and that too not in any glorified condition, but in feeble, humble, struggling, suffering state.

They witnessed Him, moreover, in but a *transient phase* of His humanity: and their bodily eyes were not constituted to see that glorified and permanent phase which is more fully consonant to His exalted position and eternal and inherent majesty.

One main defect of the disciples while Jesus was with them in the flesh consisted in their failure to recognize the Spirit of glory and of God resting upon Him and working in Him. And another defect like to it was their small, imperfect, and unworthy insight into and their lack of appreciation of His redemptive mission and work. They failed to understand and see Him as they should. Frankly He said, 'If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also. How long shall I be with you and suffer you? Oh, how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have written of Me!' They knew Him and judged Him so much from the outside only. Warm and strong as was their attachment to Him, what profound and even culpable ignorance was manifested in their misconceptions of this inner work of His! Their familiarity with His bodily presence acted like a kind of obstructive film, which prevented their hearts from flowing together in spiritual accord with

His heart and becoming spiritually enlarged. How near they were to Him, yet how far from understanding Him! His disappearing would bring changes that would help to open their eyes as to Who He was, and what He came to do; and not only purge the visual ray, but plant them in a favourable position for viewing Him aright. It was as if, instead of gazing on a stained-glass window from the outside, they needed to be led inside, to view the whole in its true colours, perspective and proportion, and see the figures and representations blended into one clear and self-interpreting picture. They had yet to know Him in His true and proper place in the religious life of mankind.

Can any one doubt that the advent of Jesus Christ was for religious ends the most important and the most determining factor in all human history? It is not enough for Him to be regarded as a great sage, like Confucius, nor a human fetish, like the Grand Llama of Thibet, nor a kind of man-god, like Buddha, boasting of having raised himself into deity by his own art and merit. He was to be no mere prophet nor founder of a religion, like Zoroaster or Mohammed, but the spring and source of the religion, the one religion,

for men, supreme, final, adequate, universal, destined to be the complement and corrective of each, and to supplant them all.

Most religions have been tribal, racial, or national; His is to be no longer restrictive in design and capability, but coextensive with mankind. How could such a faith admit of a visible God, either fixed to any local earthly centre, where men must go on pilgrimage to secure a sense of favour and goodwill or worship Him after the flesh, or still less a flitting presence moving from place to place, hither and thither—a conception destructive of the very idea of a truly spiritual worship altogether?

The disciples' view of their Master was very imperfect and one-sided from a high spiritual point of standard. They had occasional glimpses of the reality, but these were only partial and precarious at the best. They needed to be led into *all* the truth—the full-orbed roundness of view which alone is the complete and adequate view; and this could only be supplied by the Lord the Spirit leading them into the heart and centre of the truth as it is in Jesus, where they could survey the entire wholeness of the truth, in its proper relations and proportions, its full

shape and sweep, by their being led by the Spirit to the right angle of vision, where they could take *all* the truth in at a glance, because they had reached the proper focus. No omniscience was needed here: only the all-requisite spiritual or saving knowledge as spiritually apprehended, and spiritually or savingly used in its fulness. Or, as the Psalmist expresses it, 'Teach me Thy way: Thy Spirit is good: lead me into the *land of uprightness*.'

Furthermore (β) Christ's invisibleness would help them *to get closer to Him and more fully possess Him and be possessed by Him.* However close the intimacy and companionship of the disciples with their Lord, 'so near' as they were, they were yet 'so far.' They did not and could not attain their full inheritance in Him while He was visibly by them. There was to be an inner fellowship beyond anything that mere bodily proximity could furnish. He must get to be to them far more than an external presence, an external voice, an external force. 'It is expedient for you that I go away.'

How this was needful they could by no means as yet realize. That their beloved Master should withdraw Himself from them

and actually disappear as to bodily form was a heart-break. They revolted from what was so opposed to their best feelings and dearest hopes. How they were to do without Him as He had hitherto been with them was a painful and distressing problem. He had made Himself indispensable to them. He had taught and accustomed them to look to Himself for light and guidance, and to lean on Him for help and strength. He had weaned their affections from earthly cares and concerns, from business and labouring pursuits, and from the routine of their former life, and had bound them to Himself with strong yet tender ties of an altogether unwonted and unworldly order. Can it be expedient for them that He should go away? They cannot see it; they cannot yet realize how it may turn out so. Can it be expedient for pupils still so ignorant and incompetent as they feel themselves to be deprived of their Teacher; for fighting and struggling pilgrims and strangers in a strange and new world to be deprived of their one Guide and great-heart Leader; for soldiers just committing themselves to a new and difficult enterprise to be left without a Captain, and for weaklings like them to be cast upon the world without a

visible presence, powerful enough to protect and provide?

But He will not leave them, nor let them be like forsaken and disconsolate orphans. 'Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you.' Strange kind of arrangement this, of going away in order to come again! Yet it is no idle nor unmeaning process—no unprecedented casualty, nor without analogy in the physical world. The seed is cast into the furrow, and has to disappear from sight under the clods in order to come again in a wholly improved and different guise. And as the sower throws it away upon the ground, 'Foolish!' cries some ignorant or thoughtless one; 'why not keep it for food and store it up for use?' 'Thou fool!' may be the fit reply, 'it is cast away that the store of food may be increased; it is to disappear and be buried, in order to reappear in higher form—in ever fresh, green, living, growing, and multiplied form.'

If in one sense Jesus was going away, in the highest and best sense He was coming again to them—no longer a mere outward or localized presence, but a truly universal and ever-available presence, constantly, everywhere, and under all circumstances acces-

sible—a presence not only with them, but in them, and above the hampering restraints of sight and sense, of space or time. He should be present then more fully and truly than ever before. Here is a grand solace to the disconsolate and distracted disciples: neither His presence nor a sense of it should be lost because of His invisibleness. He should, even by very virtue of it, be able to enter into new and higher relations with them, hold with them closer and more varied converse, and impart to them more satisfying evidence of the reality and mutualness of their fellowship than ever before.

It is not a question of His presence, but simply of the mode or measure of it. 'The world seeth Me no more, but ye see Me'; and, 'I will manifest Myself to you in another way than to a sense-bound world. It will be My very self, a personal presence in and with persons—a cheering, strengthening, gracious, and helpful presence; I will be always coming to you, flowing in upon you like a full and free tide.'

A great mystery no doubt is all this to the disciples: 'Ye cannot bear it now; but ye shall know hereafter.' 'When ye shall no more cleave to Me after the flesh, nor seek

for Me through the eye of sense, but grasp Me by faith in all My quickening power and presence and fulness, because I go to My Father.' This was to be secured by *the truth*: by the Spirit supplying and ministering *the truth* as it has regard to Christ Himself. That was to be the Spirit's function. 'He shall testify of Me; and let you know and realize things about Me which you are in no condition as yet to welcome or enter into now.'

Again (γ) Christ's invisibleness would help them *to render Him far higher, nobler, and more valuable service.* Not that the mere fact of the invisibleness of itself could be of great avail in securing so great a result. It afforded, however, a condition of things peculiarly favourable to high attainment. As long as the disciples knew their Master chiefly, if not exclusively, 'after the flesh,' how weak and timid they were on His behalf! but when called to 'endure, as seeing Him Who is invisible,' how strong and full of noble courage! How little they did for Him, and how little interested in His cause, while He remained with them in visible form: how much they ventured and dared for Him so soon after He was gone away!

Ah! little they knew how poor and im-

perfect, how frail and feeble, was their faith, compared with the test and burden to which it would shortly be exposed and be called to bear. They felt wondrously strong when hearing their Master speak to them, and when they saw Him with them. They were like an invalid, conscious of a certain convalescence, and therefore of more strength than when laid prostrate on his bed, but feeble as a very child again when his powers have been taxed and put on the strain. It might do for the quiet of the upper room or the Paschal chamber, but not for the rough friction of an evil and angry world: not for the stress and pressure of Gethsemane or the High Priest's hall of judgment. They needed a faith far fuller of vigour and intelligence; not a faith for the chamber only, but for the fiery trials, tribulations, and temptations of fierce hatred and oppositions. One thing is an admiring, approving, quiescent faith of contemplation and hearing; another thing is a faith of fighting, conquering, suffering; as they were soon to experience. Faith may act the part of quiet discipleship when that of the soldier and the martyr may be far to seek.

They needed to be fortified with fuller and

more adequate truth. For truth, after all, is meant not merely for a guide to the eye, but a light to the feet, a lamp to the path. And they had yet to learn how 'in their faith they must supply courage.' Having got to know Christ in another way than through the eye of sense, and having grasped Him in the power and fulness of a Gospel faith—a faith no longer carnal nor sensuous—what different men the disciples became, and how differently they carried themselves! Formerly, while they seemed to prize His bodily presence, they nevertheless all forsook Him and fled. Notwithstanding all their professions of faith and attachment—and Jesus allowed the sincerity of their avowals—yet, knowing what other forces were at work in them, He could say, 'Do you now believe?' 'Yes, in a sense. You need, however, to ponder over the ground and matter of your faith, for "Behold the hour cometh, yea, is now at hand, when ye shall scatter, every one of you, to his own lurking-place, and leave Me alone."'

Now, however, when He had finally gone away out of their sight, they quietly proceeded in His name to turn the world upside down. How easily was the natural

courage of Peter turned to cowardice when challenged by a domestic servant! and how wofully could he deny his Master thrice over, and with oaths and curses, even in the immediate bodily presence of that Master and under the very glance of His bodily eye! Yet let that Master be withdrawn, so that He could be seen no more, we hear of that same Peter—the same, but not in the same state of mind—confronting the very Sanhedrin without fear or flinching, and with triumphant and unwavering courage confessing and avouching the Lord Jesus, and boldly witnessing to His name, as though His very invisibleness helped him to a fuller and more realizing sense of his Master's glory and honour, of the undeniable might and majesty of His claims, and the matchlessness of his own indebtedness and obligation.

To him, as to his brother disciples, faith was a second sight, revealing far more than either the physical or natural, or mental eye could discern. For, to the eye of faith, Jesus was no mere record or historic memory of the past, embodied only on the sacred yet ever-bright tablets of his unfading reminiscences. He was indeed and in reality all that. But more than what the page of

memory held in store, the Jesus he knew and loved and worshipped now was the Jesus as interpreted by the infallible and promised Spirit—'He shall teach you, and lead you into all the truth'—and as He appeared through the halo of His resurrection and ascension, throned within the veil, where His glorified presence is itself the abiding, illuminating light—'the Lamb is all the glory.' His is the all-prevailing intercession of the one great High Priest at the very right hand of power.

And not only so, but He is not less the object of faith, apart from sight, with whom in the Spirit He holds daily, constant, sublime communion as with a living person—the Lord of all, and the express medium through Whom the supreme mind, will, and love of Godhead can find expression.

No wonder therefore that the frail disciple whom a servant-maid's words had recently so much affrighted is so soon found facing the fierce and angry Jerusalem mob and rulers too, confessing at all cost and hazard, and stoutly defending his faith in the Crucified One, accusing and charging his hearers with the crime of having killed the Prince of Life, and getting great multitudes not only to listen

to his sermon, but persuading them to relent, and repent of this their great wickedness.

And so he becomes a fit agent, along with his fellow apostles, to inaugurate the mightiest religious movement and impulse that the world has ever known, and, by 'enduring as seeing Him Who is invisible,' to lay the foundation of a spiritual kingdom and dominion as far beyond all others of its kind as the rich fresh fruitful valley of the Nile exceeds in worth the unproductive and unfertile sandy waste of a Sahara! So was fulfilled in them His own great word, 'Verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, *because I go unto My Father*.'[1]

For under the baptism of the Holy Spirit there began to dawn on them the full significance and true greatness of the name and personality of their Master, Jesus. They began to realize things pertaining to Him in their proper proportions and magnitude. It took them a time to get accustomed to this new stereoscopic view; but as they gazed and fastened their eyes upon first the one and then the other of the twin photographs, the two diverse figures blended gradually into

[1] John xiv. 12.

one, till they inwardly beheld the one figure in its unified form. When these devout and sincere early disciples came to view the suffering Lord as risen and ascended; when they recalled or had it recalled to them that it behoved that same Jesus Who suffered and died to pass away up into heavenly glory, as He Himself had showed from the Scriptures, how these diverse and, as they once seemed, quite opposite phases fell into their proper place! The Christ on the throne gave a new meaning and grandeur to Christ on the cross; and the humiliation of His death was exalted and irradiated through the glory of His triumphant entrance into His reward.

The Divine condescension of the Son of God in becoming a partaker of suffering humanity received an aureola of glory from His throne in the heavens; and this view of the invisible Saviour dominated their entire conception of His character, mission, work, and claims.

All the diverse elements and contrary presentments of Himself, which were a stumbling-block before, became consolidated into the glorious figure of an exalted and invisible Redeemer, to whom they could render the most perfect obeisance and the most devoted and self-denying homage and service.

CHAPTER II

GAIN IN ORIGINATING A CHRISTIAN ECONOMY

My Saviour, can it ever be
That I should gain by losing Thee.

KEBLE.

Christ enters not by the eyes, for His presence is not marked by colour ; nor by the ears, for His entrance makes no sound ; nor by the touch, for you handle Him not. How, then, do I know He is present? By His awakening and quickening power. He awoke my slumbering soul, pierced my hard and stony heart, and made me bethink myself.—ST. BERNARD.

If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you ; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you.—*John* xvi. 7.

CHAPTER II

GAIN IN ORIGINATING A CHRISTIAN ECONOMY

(i) CHRIST disappeared from among men for the purpose of inaugurating a religious or spiritual economy in connection with Himself and His work—an economy evermore to be associated with and called by His own name. This *Christian dispensation* demands and is attended by a very special spiritual energy and activity, so as to be fitly called *the* dispensation of the Spirit. For it is the advent and mission of the Divine Spirit as Christ's own Spirit that alone initiates a spiritual kingdom and economy in association with Christ's name.

But to secure the mission and advent of this Spirit as the very Spirit of Christ, there is a needs-be for Christ's own going to the Father, as the condition and medium, the requisite preliminary and channel for sending the Comforter to initiate such an economy,

and thereby effectually to represent and minister Christ to the hearts and consciences of men.

We do not wonder, therefore, if the main body of Scripture-teaching regarding the Holy Spirit is chiefly from the lips of Jesus Himself. It is from Himself we have the first and principal instruction respecting the Holy Spirit's personal work and relations to Himself.

The chief outstanding name that He gives Him is *the Comforter*, the very name He challenges also for Himself. '*Another* Comforter the Father will send in My name,' He says to His disconsolate disciples in prospect of being parted from them. By 'another' Comforter He intimates that all they had found Himself to be they would experience in the coming Promised One, after a yet more inward and intimate fashion.

The name *Paraclete*, though very simple, because meaning 'one called to the aid of another,' is (as a technical term derived from the usages of old Roman law) very striking and suggestive; quite a remarkable and very comprehensive word, having no exact equivalent in our own tongue. A paraclete or advocate (not in our modern sense of a hired pleader, but in the older sense of *ad-vocatus*,

one called to our side) was the representative head or chief of a clan; a patron, friend, or kinsman of rank and influence, who stood by and took the part of a client summoned before a tribunal, and did the best he could on his behalf. This is a comforter, in the old-English usage of the word, rather than in its present more limited sense. It signifies and should be pronounced comfōrter, according to its Norman-French sound and meaning of *Supporter*,—as when in Wyclif (Isa. xli. 7) we read of the figure of the idol, 'He comfōrted it with nails' (he supported or held it up with nails), 'that it should not be moved.' A comfōrter is, then, a supporter or upholder whom we can summon to our aid under all the varying circumstances of our need; one ready and able and willing to come at our call to our relief and rescue, when our own strength and influence cannot sufficiently prevail, and who can effectually act for us and in our interest in so many ways as guardian, helper, counsellor, monitor, instructor, protector, sustainer, consoler, and the like.

All this Jesus had been to the disciples. But very especially, in a religious sense, He had espoused their higher good, been concerned to promote their genuine goodness, and

had introduced them into a new and higher spiritual sphere of things, making them heirs of many undreamed-of privileges, telling them of their Father in heaven, how to address Him, and how to order their cause and pour out their hearts before Him; how by dauntless trust in the Father and Himself they could be raised above the region of doubt and distraction, of remorseful fear and anxious foreboding, and be armed against the wiles and deceptive temptations of their great and subtle adversary, so as to overcome him; and He had shed into their hearts a sense of Divine love and of a blessedness born of God, and fraught with purity, pity, mercy, forgiveness, unworldliness, and unselfish benignity.

'The other Comforter, Who is the Holy Ghost, Whom the Father is about to send in My name, He will be My fitting representative and administrator *within* you. And though He is one Whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, nevertheless He will continue to perpetuate My presence and work in the world, it being His specific mission to interpret, commend, and reveal Me in all saving offices to the hearts and consciences and lives of men.'

This is His whole supreme work and

function, 'to take of Mine and show it unto you'—'to be so the representative and minister of Myself as to cause men to realize My abiding presence with them and in them.' For His great task will be so to convey to men's minds and hearts Christ's real presence and full personality as to keep it free from the limitations of the visible and temporary. The Holy Spirit's highest work is to make each heart where He dwells the dwelling-place of Christ. Thus He never speaks of Himself; His whole testimony is of Christ. The truth He shows is Christ's truth, the truth as it is in Jesus. The grace He imparts is the grace of the Lord Jesus, in order to the production of His own graces in men's souls. So Christ is the object He reveals to us, the object He glorifies to us, the object He reproduces in us. He is Christ's advocate with us, as Christ is our advocate with the Father. In short, the Holy Spirit is the true and full interpreter of Christ to the heart, as Christ Himself is the true and full interpreter of the Father to us.

And thus, as Christ's administrator, He takes the management of all religious matters in their relation to Christ, and He inaugurates a spiritual economy in association with Christ's

name. In doing so, He is no mere influence; but being personally subsistent in Godhead, He acts on human spirits as being themselves personal agents. How He does so may be a mystery, but it is, if greater in degree, yet of the same kind as that of one human spirit influencing another. We are all aware of the fact that the sympathetic and zealous teacher enters in some effective though unknown way into the thoughts and mental processes of his pupils, and that he inspires them with his own thoughts and enthusiasm, and so imparts himself to them. We all know that in the heat of battle the brave and energetic officer infuses his own bravery and energy into his men, so that they are carried beyond their ordinary selves. He pierces and animates their being with a daring and a devotion kindred to his own; and are we to deny such influence and quickening power to the energetic working of the Holy Spirit of God on the spirit of man, endued as He is with so potent an instrument of stirring and rousing not the intelligence only, but the whole rational and moral nature of man, his reason, conscience, will, emotions, instincts, and affections, as is supplied in 'the things of Christ,' our Saviour and Deliverer?

Confusion here would often be avoided, not to say fallacy, if men would cease imagining they know more of matter and have more certain evidence of it than they have of spirit. Let us never forget that it is only through mind or spirit that we can know anything of matter at all, or that there is such a thing as matter, and by spirit we just mean all that does not come and cannot be brought under the definition and properties of matter; and every one recognizes with ease what is understood by his spirit as the seat and evidence of his own personality. All are aware of passing through incessant changes of body and mind; not only are the particles of our physical frame in constant flux, but our habits, views, affections, purposes, and character change. But every one is not less aware, intuitively and without requiring to be taught by inference or observation or instruction, that the same personal self persists through all such changes, and no child needs to be informed by others that he is always the same person, any more than he needs to be taught to cry.

Now, this is the knowledge of spirit—a simple idea incapable of further analysis. It is that with which nothing material can

challenge comparison—a subsistence without shape, colour, or other material attributes, and that can neither be cut, weighed, nor made visible. The very conception of this attests that man's experience does not consist of a mere succession of individual or isolated items, but of a unity and a consciousness of unity that binds them all into one.

No doubt we are composite beings, with a material and animal and a spiritual nature, having very varied relations and affinities. But by a *human spirit* we mean all that is essential to differentiate between man and animal; and 'no man knows the things of a man, but the spirit of a man that is in him.'

When we speak of body, soul, and spirit in human nature, we mean by soul in that connection simply animal life, with the observing and knowing powers attached thereto, and in man it is the nexus between body and spirit. And whenever we speak of man's nature as a composite of soul and body, we in that case understand the human soul to include spirit as the seat of personality, and the scene and sphere of abstract thought and general ideas as well as of religious capacity and experience. This capacity may be lying

dormant, sin acting on it like bitter frost on seeds, preventing the process of germination. And just as there may be a waking up of mental energy and intellectual power under suitable incentives, so may there be religious revival in the soul, with fresh outbursts of spiritual activity and interest, no more to be denied or overlooked than any other phenomenal experience among men. To produce such spiritual resurrection man's spirit needs the action and presence of the Holy Spirit, just as the seed, with its inherent capacity for germination, does yet require as favourable conditions the presence and action of warmth, light, moisture, and other vitalizing forces. And it is interesting to note that these very influences—water, heat, light, air, dew, and the like—are the very symbols in sacred Scripture chosen to indicate the operative energy of the Divine Spirit on our spirits.

Spiritual life is a distinct order of life in us, just as spiritual experience is a distinct order of experience.

Now, life of any kind can only come from kindred antecedent life: this doctrine of biogenesis being one of the best established of more recent and modern scientific demonstrations. Life has never appeared independently

of antecedent life. And what is true of the physical is not less true of the spiritual life. And it is according to the law of the different orders of life that the lower can be lifted up into the region of the higher only by the higher life taking the lower into union with itself. Thus, if plant life is to be lifted up into higher kind of animal life, it cannot be by any mere internal force or self-energy of the plant, but by the animal life taking it up into union with itself, and thus assimilating it into its own life. So for us to have spiritual Christian life, of which our nature is susceptible, we must be taken up into vital union with Christ Himself by an effectual faith-bond through the presence and acting power of the Holy Spirit. 'He that hath the Son hath life': 'I am come that they might have life.' The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus alone makes us free from the law of sin and death. This is the law of life administered by the Spirit in the name and power of the Lord Jesus. So while the seat and scene of its working and manifestation is the spirit in man, the real source and originating cause of this spiritual life and experience is the Spirit of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. That cause

is, of course, no more known to consciousness than is the cause of physical life. But the fact, the experience, the reality is as truly known in the one case as in the other.

(ii) But we may now note *how* the Spirit of God sent forth as the Spirit of Christ effects the *connection between Christ and our spiritual life*, as being new life in Christ, and revealing itself no longer as merely religious life, but more distinctly as Christian life. Formerly the Holy Spirit was of course ever at work in men's hearts and consciences, creating and maintaining spiritual life and experience. But while that spiritual life was the same essentially in kind and nature, it had not, of course, and could not have, the specific features of what is now life in Christ. The Spirit had not yet been given as the Spirit of Christ, and could not be using Christ as His instrument, because Christ was not as yet fully manifested as the triumphantly glorified Redeemer of men.

Hitherto in the past the Spirit had been in some real measure vouchsafed to men, and had been at work in their hearts and lives. 'Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me,' is a prayer of the Psalmist. But besides this epithet of 'Holy' there were others which

we find of rich and varied significance associated with His name. So we read of 'the Spirit of glory and of God resting' on some one, and the prayer of another is, 'Uphold me with Thy *free* Spirit'; while we find such further references as 'the Spirit of wisdom and might,' 'Thy good Spirit,' 'I will put *My* Spirit upon them.' And there is held out the promise of 'a new Spirit, which I will put *within* you,' and in connection with a 'new covenant' or economy, pointing to a certain advance in the *measure* of the 'gift' of the Spirit as well as in the improved *manner and medium* of His agency and the improved *instrument* He would have in carrying forward His work. There would be such a difference of spiritual administration in its more immediate association with Christ's person and work as to be designated, not by way of exclusiveness, but rather of pre-eminence as compared with the past, 'the dispensation of the Spirit.'

(iii) In this dispensation of the Spirit His action differs in certain important respects from His action and agency in the former times of the patriarchs and the prophets. Not to dwell on the fact that it was by a special operation of the Holy Spirit that Jesus

was Himself made partaker of our humanity and entered into our race, and that the Spirit of God rested on Him and possessed Him in no stinted fashion, but even *without measure*, as had never been known before in all human experience, we may recall such especially distinctive features as these:

(*a*) The Spirit was formerly *lent*, so to speak, *on trust*, vouchsafed on the credit of what Christ *was to do*. But *now* it is on the ground and through the channel of what Christ *has done* that He is to be hence-forward shed forth abundantly, so that He becomes in us an overflowing and ever-gushing well of water springing up into life everlasting.

The expression, 'I will *pour out* My Spirit upon *all flesh*,' indicates both the new fulness of the effusion and the increased width over which it was to extend. Formerly the channel was deep and never without water, but the amount was scanty and the supply intermittent or gathered up into pools. Now the river was to be not only brimful, but overflowing like a flood upon the dry ground, and yet more abiding, and constant, and unfailing in its sources and measures of supply, because of the clearing and the

opening up of ceaselessly gushing springs and fountains.

Now, this is not the mere sequel, but it is the fit result and reward of Christ's redemptive work and suffering; the fit evidence and witness to its completeness and its triumphant accomplishment. The Spirit was now no more bestowed on trust of what Christ would do, but as fit recognition, reward, and acknowledgment of what He had actually done; and is vouchsafed no more in trickling streams, but in an exhaustless ocean fulness.

(*b*) The only other distinction we may at present note—and it is perhaps the chief and most significant one—is that *when Christ's work was finished, the Holy Spirit was put in possession for the first time of the most perfect instrument for spiritual service.* Herein lay the most suitable medium of spiritual enlightenment, and the most effective implement for carrying and imparting Divine and saving impression to the minds, and hearts, and consciences of men. In Christ's cross He found the most potent machinery for moving men's wills and turning them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.

Hence the world began to see sights it

had not been ever before accustomed to see, and to hear things that startled it out of religious indifference, and to feel strange influences wooing and winning it from the minding only of earthly concerns to attend more than ever earnestly to the things of the Spirit of God.

For as Christ needed a body to accomplish His work among men, so the Holy Spirit needed a body of saving and sanctifying truth to carry on His work efficiently ; and this He found in richest measure in that new body of truth as it is in Jesus—in His incarnation, life, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension. Then it is not so much with the abstract things of God—not with the things of natural religion, such as the evidences of the existence of God, or our dependence on Him, or His natural and habitual kindness and goodness to us, and our obligation and responsibility to Him ; not so much with these things, as rather with the gracious, winning, tender gospel of God's redeeming and matchless love to us in Christ Jesus, that the hearts of men are best stirred to their depths, bowed down in all lowliness and melted into tender relentings, moved and drawn away from their indifference to

religion, and shamed out of their loveless and heartless antipathy to the things of God. It is with the things of Christ that the Spirit chiefly awakens an interest in things Divine, and creates in men's hearts a searching and yearning after such things Divine and spiritual, and puts us on ways of finding life and guidance into the paths of righteousness and peace.

So we realize how it is not enough that Christ should have done great things for us, unless He were also doing great things *in* us. Salvation in one sense of the word stands, no doubt, for the salvation achieved on our behalf once for all by Christ in His Cross. But of what avail were an historical salvation accomplished on Calvary so long as it remained outside of and apart from us, so long as it took no effect upon us, and laid no hold on us, and we laid no hold upon it? Salvation as a personal salvation has reference to something effected in us, and not simply for us. This process must necessarily be an invisible, because an internal or spiritual one; and the invisibleness of Christ by His going away left room, so to speak, for such process being more efficiently carried forward within us.

It is not given to us to fathom all the reasons rendering it imperative for Christ's withdrawal from outward sight before the advent and work of the Spirit were possible. There may be laws in the very administration of a spiritual economy hid from our powers of comprehension, which, however, might render the physical abiding of the Saviour wholly incongruous, if not inconsistent with such an economy altogether. Be that as it may, we find it made clear enough to us that to achieve the full union of the Son of God with our humanity, there must not only be His incarnation, which constitutes Him one of our race as to external relation, but there must be an immanent, internal possession of us by Himself through the advent, and indwelling, and inworking of His own Spirit within us. This ensures the real immanence of Christ in His Church and people; the abiding presence and indwelling of Himself in the power of the Spirit in that mystical body of His—the Church, as the fulness of Him Who filleth all in all. And as this involves the revelation and effectual conveyance of Christ in the fulness of His redemptive offices and functions, that whole saving work as an external work must needs

be completed before He could send the Spirit of all grace as *His own very Spirit* to complete the work within.

So His own full union (in His character of mediator) with the Father must be secured and evidenced before He becomes the perfect medium for communicating the Divine Spirit in His fulness to our human nature. And is it not a peculiarly appropriate part of His reward that, having finished His work as our incarnate representative, and having furnished in His atoning sacrifice of Himself to God the alone true and perfect instrument for reaching the heart and conscience of humanity, He should Himself be constituted the dispenser and sender of the Spirit, as the fruit of all His labours?

And just as there is a physical needs-be that the light and heat of the sun should have and must have an invisible atmosphere for their conveyance and diffusion, the invisible Saviour is the fit and effective medium and channel through whom the Spirit should fulfil His work. Thus the right to ask for the Spirit, the power to send Him and the medium of His action are all secured by Christ's returning to the Father, so that we see Him in the flesh no more. By His thus going away, the Spirit's mission is so

bound up with Christ's invisible presence as to be not only a mission *from* Christ, but *through* Christ, and *with* Christ as His sealing power, and *for* Christ also in all that the Spirit purposes. And is it not supremely becoming to the Saviour's benevolent character that such largesses of the Spirit should ever be associated and bound up with Christ's own real yet invisible prophetic presence, His kingly glorification, and His high-priestly intercession and kindred prerogatives?

Thus is He 'able to save to the uttermost all them that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.' And so the idea of this intercession of His is no cold, hard, dry abstraction, but is rendered warm with living, winning, attractive power.

Not that the Father is stern, implacable, and difficult to be moved favourably on our behalf: for, on the contrary, 'the Father Himself loveth you'; but we need the encouraging assurance that 'we have not a high priest who cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities,' but One Who 'having suffered being tempted' is disposed and qualified to be a merciful as well as faithful High Priest on our behalf—the Great Sufferer for us being the Great Sympathizer now. And how agreeable

and gratifying to His benignant disposition to occupy a place and fill an office that keeps open the channel for all saving benefits and Divine influence continually flowing forth in fulness: to be the effectual means for the dispensation of the Father's grace, and yet mingle with it the delightful relish of His own sympathy and the sweet savour of His own mediatorial merits and intercession to which we owe it all. 'If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you.'

CHAPTER III

GAIN IN DEVELOPING A SPIRITUAL KINGDOM UNDER CHRIST

Jesus came preaching the *gospel of the kingdom of God*, and saying, The time is fulfilled.—*Mark* i. 14, 15.

Now is come salvation, and strength, and *the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ:* for the accuser of our brethren is cast down.—*Rev.* xii. 10.

When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on Me; of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye see Me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.—*John* xvi. 8–11.

CHAPTER III

GAIN IN DEVELOPING A SPIRITUAL KINGDOM UNDER CHRIST

HAVING now seen the gain and advantage of Christ's invisibleness to the first disciples, and the further gain and advantage of it in inaugurating or initiating a kingdom of the Spirit and connecting it with Christ's name by the advent and mission of a Spirit all His own, we advance a step farther, to consider how or by what measures this Spirit of Christ proceeds in developing a kingdom that can truly be called Christ's own kingdom.

(i) There are three great *obstacles* to be overcome in effecting such a result, and these three obstacles Jesus emphasizes in the above passage: (*a*) the lack in the world of any adequate sense of sin, and an adequate dissuasive from it; (*b*) the lack of any adequate standard and sense of the need of righteousness worthy of the name, and of any adequate

dynamic energy to ensure it; and (*c*) the lack of any well-assured and adequate strength to cope successfully with the power and dominion of evil.

Now, there are three mighty forces within us—the three transcendent but invisible fibres of our being which we call Faith, Love, and Hope; and if these were but called into full play and yoked with corresponding invisible forces derived from Christ, then the whole powers of a superhuman kingdom would be found to be at work. The mission of the Holy Spirit is just to get us to connect these hidden powers that are within us with the threefold supplies of grace in Christ Jesus; for by such a connection there will be seen at once in highest efficiency *the* work of faith, *the* labour of love, and *the* patience of hope. For want of this connection, these mightiest and most majestic forces of human nature, our faith, hope, and love, lie dormant and inefficient. Or they are wasted and thrown away by being diverted from their highest objects, so that neither ourselves nor others get all the joy and benefit from them they otherwise would yield.

Now, this is the work of the Spirit of God, so far as we personally are concerned, to

exhibit Christ as the one ideal and all-perfect object of our faith, love, and hope, and to persuade and enable us to fix these fibres of our being on Him alone, above all other competing objects on which they may be set, and to help us to draw up out of Him those supplies and supports which alone can sustain these powers in their fullest vigour and their most joyful exercise.

Man's nature in its original design is to know and accept the essentially true; to admire and grow into the essentially beautiful, and to receive and enjoy the essentially good. The Spirit's work is to lead us to identify all central, saving, and essential *truth* with Christ in His teaching and prophetic functions; to associate eternal and unfading *beauty* with Christ in all His priestly character and functions, so as to see it and be ourselves transformed into it, by this vision of Christ in His personality, His character, and His cross; and to take hold of Him so as to reach forth to all lasting and final *good*, which can alone be found in connection with His kingly functions and His felt dominion over our whole individual being.

In its present condition human nature is indisposed either to see or receive the *truth* as

it is in Jesus; it is averse to the standard and character of the holy *beauty* that shines in Him; and it is reluctant to choose and cleave to the *good* which He alone proffers and can alone vouchsafe. Christ's invisibleness affords room and verge enough at once for the play of our faith, love, and hope toward Him, and for the display by His Spirit of all the excellencies of the *true*, the *beautiful*, and the *good* in Him as the alone adequate spiritual dynamic for convicting the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.

A man must have (1) an adequate sense of sin; a sense of it corresponding to what it is in its nature, reality, magnitude, pervasiveness, and guilt—and not a mere consciousness of its existence and troublesomeness when perpetrated by others, but a consciousness of it as his own, a rebuking and condemning consciousness of it as present and operative in his own heart, else he will never see a place for a kingdom of God, never appreciate its privileges, never seek a Saviour, nor feel that he needs one. And unless a man realize (2) the glory of a perfect righteousness, and be assured there is such a thing for him to rectify his relations with his Father in heaven and to remedy his own poignant sense of demerit for positive

shortcoming and evil-doing, there will be no settled peace, or comfort, or abiding joy, or any of the other blessings of a benign and heavenly kingdom *for him here and now*. And (3) if he have no fixed expectation that the kingdom and dominion of evil has been already vanquished and is doomed to final ruin and overthrow, he will lose heart in the long conflict, and surrender himself to spiritual indifference, lethargy, or pessimistic despair.

(ii) Here, then, is the *threefold evangelical and saving procedure* whereby the Spirit of Christ, in developing a spiritual kingdom in the power of His grace, turns Christ Invisible to the fullest account, and utilizes Him for that threefold purpose which is here described.

(*a*) '*He will convict the world of sin, because they believe not on Me.*' By this is meant not simply His revealing the wickedness of rejecting or despising Christ as being a great criminal offence against truth, righteousness, and love, or as being a fontal or mother sin in itself, but chiefly His making men feel that sin lies bound on the world as a disgrace, a curse, and a torment so long as they are not believing in Him, the invisible but ever-present Saviour. For if there be but one Saviour, it is because the world needs but

one, for He is the very all-suitable and all-sufficient Saviour it needs.

It is a great part of the Spirit's work to bring home to the world's heart and conscience that, apart from believing in Him Whom God has sent as the alone adequate Redeemer, there is no deliverance from an otherwise irremediable evil, an otherwise unremovable curse and burden. It is the revelation of Christ dying for sin that becomes, in the hands of the Spirit, the best instrument for bringing home to men's hearts and consciences the melting, subduing, and humbling sense of sin, not as a mere negative imperfection in human nature, but a positively wicked and criminal enmity and antipathy to God and goodness—not something of good in the making, as some would fondly think of sin, but rather the very unmaking of good, the very reversal of goodness. Herein consists the *sinfulness* of sin, the guilt and criminality of wickedness. And it is in the presentation, by the Spirit, of Christ crucified and condemned to die by the world's sin, as well as for the world's sin, that there is produced in men's souls a truly spiritual, principled, and abiding *conviction* of the sinfulness of sin, with tender *contrition* for it, self-condemning *confession* of it, and practical

conversion, and turning with hatred and loathing from it.

Here the Spirit finds that burning-glass for focusing the rays of Divine holiness, righteousness, grace, and love upon frozen and ice-bound hearts, and melting them into the exercise of penitential relentings. It is by the Spirit's *inward* representation of the invisible Saviour to the world's heart and conscience that the world is to be convinced of its own sinfulness in sinning, such conviction being brought home to it by the self-condemning effects and experiences of not believing in the name of the only-begotten Son of God, such unbelief being the very heart and core of all ungodliness and sinfulness both of character and life. It is here that the Holy Spirit finds all the motive forces and all the springs of dynamic power for enlightening men's minds in the knowledge of what sin really is, and so in softening their hearts, subjugating their wills, and solemnly impressing their consciences. He wins and woos by Christ as well as for Christ, is never divorced from Christ, and He never seeks to achieve any spiritual faith dissociated from Christ. It is by the Spirit's representation of Christ and His interpretation of Him to the soul that the

world gets to be convinced of its own great sinfulness, and acquires a sense of the self-condemning fruits of not believing in Christ's name. And this is the universal experience of all Christian believers.

And so wonderful are the moral fruits and effects of a conviction of the wickedness and evil deserts of not believing in Christ's name that it affects and works on men morally and spiritually, as the outer atmosphere operates on the physical constitution of men—like a substance and arrangement fitted and intended to subserve an immensely diversified variety of physical ends, such as protecting by its elasticity all living things from hurt and destruction, while our globe rushes through space at the almost incredible speed of eleven hundred miles a minute, and yet sustaining vegetable life with nourishment and supplying the lungs of animal beings so very differently constructed with what shall keep *them* in play, a vehicle too and medium at the same time of light, colour, heat, and sound, as well as a highway of winds, electric currents, clouds, and rain—and a reservoir of innumerable and varied gases, chemicals, and hidden molecular forces. For not less marvellous are the moral and spiritual benefits derived from a con-

viction of the evils of not believing in Jesus, in Whom are combined such adaptations of God's simple, artless, unencumbered plan for affording an effective exhibition at once of the Divine mercy and the Divine rectitude, the Divine severity and the Divine tenderness, the Divine holiness and the Divine forbearance.

Here is something to bring home to men's conscience how badly they have deserved at the hand of God, and yet, instead of overwhelming them in despair, inspiring them rather with true and filial-hearted trust in and confidence toward Him they have so affronted and offended; something to deeply humble yet grandly elevate men's spirits; something that achieves double yet opposite triumphs, such as deepening in men the sense of guilt, yet prompting them to look to the same source for peace to an aggrieved and remorseful conscience; something fitted to smite, and yet to heal—to kill, yet to make alive; to wound and chasten, yet at the same time cheer and exhilarate the soul; to work repentance and faith; to put a new spirit in the old man, so as at once to make him, while 'dead to sin,' yet 'alive unto righteousness.'

(*b*) '*He will convince the world of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye see*

Me no more.' The cross of Christ, which brings out into painful clearness the black infamy of the world's sin, brings out no less into bold relief the effulgent glory of Christ's remedial and redemptive righteousness.

The world called Him a sinner, cast Him out and put Him to death as a malefactor, and treated Him as all unworthy and unrighteous. How grossly mistaken, how criminally perverted, was this judgment! What a demonstration that the world's idea of righteousness was miserably false as well as ineffective! In the act of condemning Him, what a condemnation to itself! The event showed that the world's way of maintaining righteous judgment was as imperfect in its standard as it was perverse and malicious in its application of it. Christ's resurrection from the dead and His ascension to spiritual power and glory were Heaven's attestation and witness to His all-perfect and accepted righteousness, while the advent of the Spirit and His effusion in Christ's name were ample ratification and confirmation of that same testimony. What *light*, new and fresh light, is cast upon righteousness—light on what righteousness really *is*—by the Holy Spirit being able to avail Himself of the righteousness unfolded

by Christ and exemplified in Him! The righteousness evidenced by His going to the Father, and being seen outwardly no more, is certified as no mere external compliance with any formal rules and regulations, but belongs essentially to the hidden invisible man of the heart.

Such righteousness is of course to be seen in outward acts and conduct, but must never be divorced from the thoughts and intents of the *inward* nature. Murder is not the mere external act; it includes the secret and hidden nature and malice. So theft is not the mere act of stealing, but the latent disposition to steal, without which no theft can be. Similarly, on the opposite side, real righteousness is not any mere self-righteousness, not some fond attention to certain conventional rules of moral decency merely; not a mere grinding away at outward ritual or ceremonial observances in matters of religion without regard to principled obedience to Divine and ethical law and requirement. A righteous being is one who, while doing righteously, does it out of a righteous nature, and out of a love for righteousness for its own sake; and who discharges equally *all parts* of righteousness, not picking and

selecting some to do, and leaving others undone.

With the cross of Christ, the revelation and fulfilment of all righteousness, the Holy Spirit pricks men's hearts and consciences, and convinces them of what true righteousness is that is worthy of the name. As good fruit comes only from good sap in a good tree, so righteousness can come only from the principle of and liking for righteousness working in a righteous character and nature; in a heart that is steadfastly fixed and settled on the side of righteousness, and that wells up freely and spontaneously in righteousness. And this righteousness embraces and demands all kinds and classes of moral excellence, carried out on every side and in every relation of life. Not the stronger, or, as they are deemed, the more masculine only of virtues, such as truth, courage, justice, rectitude, and the like; but it requires no less the gentler and more feminine aspects of it, such as patience under injury, forgiveness of personal wrongs, meekness, mercifulness, purity, pity, humility, sympathy, kindness, and beneficence. Looking at all these graces as perfectly displayed by Jesus Himself in His life and death, in His active virtue and His passive virtue, the

Holy Spirit can present to men an ultimate *standard* of righteousness such as the world can nowhere display, and a strong *motive* for it, as well as a puissant aid to it nowhere else presented.

And all Christ did and submitted to, all He undertook and underwent, all He achieved and suffered, was wholly in the interests of righteousness as an exemplification of the holiness, equity, integrity, benevolence, and irreversibleness of the moral law as *the* alone and supreme law of our being and our well-being.

That law He was concerned to magnify and make honourable, however human nature, with its biased prepossessions and unworthy and imperfect standard of ideals, may imagine that it is demanding more from human nature than it can do. Men are apt to say in their hearts (like the evil-minded servant in the parable) that the Lord asks more of them than He ought, and exacts of them a heavier tax than they should be called on to bear.

The Holy Spirit alone can weed out this root of bitterness from the heart of the world, by revealing Christ, not merely as exemplifying but *providing* for it and proffering freely the benefits of the all-perfect righteousness

which He has wrought out and brought in for us; and by our application for which, and by His application of which, the whole situation is altered, a peaceful arrangement is secured, and a thoroughly new and happy method of adhesion to the law of God is finally gained.

To be enclosed in Christ, the alone righteous One—the Lord *our* righteousness—conscience is pacified, fears are quelled, the whole man is satisfied, and his whole attitude and regard for righteousness is changed For who of human kind can boast of a perfect righteousness in himself? In presence of the righteousness which Christ displays, what can all our own righteousness be but filthy rags, that can neither clothe our nakedness nor conceal our foulness? Who can present a righteousness of his own, or be entitled to say of it, 'This is enough to meet all requirements and make amends for fatal shortcomings?' Where, then, is such a righteousness to be had? 'I bring near My righteousness'; meaning by this not the personal or Divine attribute, nor the character of rectitude inherent in the Divine nature, but a method of furnishing us with what the holy law requires, and what no less the clamours of

an enlightened, awakened, and disquieted conscience also demands. 'For this,' says an apostle, 'we do not need to say in our hearts, Who shall ascend into heaven—that is, to bring Christ down from above? Or into the deep, to bring Him up from the dead? For the righteousness which is of God by faith speaketh on this wise, The word is nigh thee,' even the word of the Gospel message.

Hear, therefore, what is its decree and judgment: 'Christ hath wrought out and brought in an everlasting righteousness, which is upon all and for all them that believe.'

It has been sometimes said, 'But why does not God freely forgive and receive His sinful prodigals like an earthly parent?' Oh, the shame of suggesting that God does not pardon far more freely than any earthly parent, however tender! Oh, the shame of forgetting that God deals with offenders' *guilt and the sense of it* as no earthly parent ever affects to do! And even the righteousness needful for the removal of guilt is freely and gratuitously provided and proffered, so that He may answer the distressful cry of the suppliant, 'Take all my guilt away.' No earthly parent can pretend to meet such

an appeal as that. Divinely righteous forgiveness alone does it.

This, then, is no mere legal fiction nor pious make-believe. It is a tremendous reality for every one who wants his sins righteously forgiven, and is ready to receive and welcome the benefits of a Redeemer's righteousness—for there is no transference of character or merit in this process, but the righteousness is reckoned or imputed to the acceptor's account: while the same faith which unites to Christ for the good of a righteousness imputed binds inevitably the beneficiary to a love of righteousness—the love of a perfect righteousness for its own sake—and so, at the same time, an inwrought righteousness is infallibly imparted and secured.

Thus Christ is set forth by the Holy Spirit's illumination to be both 'the righteousness of God' to the sinner and the righteousness of the sinner to God.

And this is why Christ behoved to be seen no more on earth, because there was nothing further for Him to do on it to which His bodily presence could contribute. But because of righteousness of the true and perfect kind, and in its interests, He has

gone to the Father to be the channel of its conveyance, as well as to send the Spirit to demonstrate in the world the perfection, acceptance, and abiding availableness of the righteousness He has achieved for us, and now presents on our behalf, with a liberty for us to plead its virtue, for which His visible presence is neither needful nor in any way helpful. Thus the Holy Spirit arms the soul and conscience with a plea of righteousness which alone can answer the fears of a thorough inquiry, and meet a charge of judgment which would be only unto condemnation.

Finally, (*c*) '*He will convince the world of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.*' A great sentence has gone forth into the moral world, and a lawless usurper is righteously condemned to surrender his unrighteously seized power and dominion. Assuming to make himself lord and master of this world, and affecting to bear sway over it by gilded lies, by cunning blandishments, by false pretences and crafty frauds, as malignant and cruel as they are invidious and subtle, he has been righteously condemned to lose his hold, and to see all his ambitions and contrivances exposed and

shattered. A discredited, outwitted, and vanquished pretender, he has found already his glory eclipsed, the nerves and sinews of his empire shivered and shattered, and the resources of his power cut off and in process of being altogether dried up. He staked his all on having Christ rejected and crucified; he lost his all through the Cross itself becoming Christ's very throne and crown. There—by the whole processes of the Divine government—the judicial processes of moral order have received fresh force and sanction, and the holy law has been vindicated, its glory, excellence, and majesty upheld, and its sway not only recovered, but vastly enlarged.

Two kings and kingdoms thus stand forth revealed as never before in clear contrast and conflict. The pitched battle has been fought; and now the prince of this world has been cast *down*, the pledge and prelude of his being certainly at last cast *out*. In hand-to-hand struggle has the conflict been joined. The whole gospel story can be told in terms of the long and sharp personal encounter, from the first fierce onset in the wilderness temptation to the time when 'the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing

in Me,' and the old word was fulfilled, 'Thou shalt bruise his head, if he shall bruise Thy heel.' For has not the Son of God our Saviour entered into this world on behalf of its rightful and lawful Lord, to wrest it from the grasp and sway of a lawless usurper, and to establish in it a kingdom and dominion of such a sort as shall demonstrate the intrinsic superiority of goodness, truth, and righteousness, when on equal terms and in fair fight their immortal energies are pitted against malignity, falseness, and all iniquity, however cunningly disguised or secretly plotted?

By this kingdom of God is not meant that moral government or overruling Providence under which all men and things are managed and regulated, but that special redemptive or restorative economy which does not reverse or supersede universal moral order, but, working in accordance with it, and as a power within it, seeks to secure salvation for and in men with the defence and triumph of moral order among them.

The Church is not identical nor co-extensive with this kingdom of grace and redemption, which is meant to embrace all human activities and interests in politics, science, law, art,

trade, and the like—the Church being the instrument and agency for defending and extending that kingdom, to which it stands related very much as the executive authority or administrative forces in any civil state, and its aim is to overcome and baffle the operations and influences of the spirit of wickedness on earth.

And as this hidden spirit of wickedness has to be spiritually discerned, and searched out and wrestled with, so it can only be successfully met and overthrown by a kingdom of a Spirit wielding no merely visible, carnal, nor worldly weapons, but employing only spiritual forces to cope effectually with the secret things of a kingdom of darkness. And how best can such affairs and interests be administered but by an invisible King and Head operating through a Spirit of light and life, of love and liberty? How much of this kingdom of His had Christ to set forth in word and deed, in parable and miracle, in signs and wonders? Did not He open His ministry by preaching the gospel of the kingdom, setting it forth in His first royal manifesto, with its benedictions, laws, and relations; and illustrating it from time to time in its theocratic constitution, its spiritual

methods, aims, and operations, its sacred principles and privileges, its universal scope and sway, and finally its triumphant, all-absorbing, all-pervading, and all-subduing influence? This is no kingdom of outward meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Such a kingdom can never gather and crystallize around a visible or local Christ on earth, however much it must draw its motive power and exhaustless energy from His life and death of redeeming love.

Men may fashion for themselves a Christ Who is primarily an earthly reformer, but the real Christ set His heart *first* on a spiritual kingdom; and this is His order of things, and any other runs counter to His whole mind and aim. 'Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,' while nothing doubting that all needful earthly blessings will naturally wait thereon.

Some mighty hero or conqueror may found an empire, but he cannot ensure a succession equal to himself; so his empire passes away with his own disappearance from among men.

But against this kingdom of the Spirit the gates of hell can never prevail. Christ's governance of it is not like that of a human

monarch, whose visible rule controls from the outside by merely external power, and agency, and resource. Here is an everlasting kingdom, whose resources are inexhaustible and perennial, maintained by an administration that is subject to no earthly contingencies and liable to no successful attack.

'For now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of God, and the power of His Christ. And He shall reign for ever and ever. For the accuser of the brethren is cast down; and the prince of this world has been exposed and judged.'

CHAPTER IV

GAIN IN EVOKING A CHRISTIAN LIFE AND EXPERIENCE

Unless above himself he can
Erect himself, how mean a thing is man!
'Ah!' *Nature cries,* 'that strife divine
Whence was it, for it is *not mine?*'

The Spirit of truth, Whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you . . . Because I live, ye shall live also.—*John* xiv. 17, 19.

Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all the truth: for He shall not speak of Himself . . . He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you.—*John* xvi. 13, 14.

CHAPTER IV

GAIN IN EVOKING A CHRISTIAN LIFE AND EXPERIENCE

What is it that excites thought and feeling in our souls? What is it that constitutes knowledge and experience in us? People in every age have put these and similar questions to themselves, and have often waited in vain for an answer.

We know how powerfully moved and excited we are by things around us, by what we see, hear, or touch, by what we eat, drink, and come in contact with. Our environment does most powerfully stir and animate us. The spirit of the age in which we live, the society in which we move, the mental, moral, and religious atmosphere we habitually breathe, do not all these not only influence, but may at times most powerfully arouse and stimulate us? Of course it is life and its potencies that underlie all of this, and render any such experiences and

energetic activities possible. And life is a thing infinitely varied and capable of innumerable modifications. We speak of physical, animal, and vegetable life, of individual, social, and political life, of mental, moral, and religious life—and all these forms and conditions of life have their own phenomena and experiences, very diverse in their manifestations from one another. Yet we think of:

(i) *The fact of an invisible spiritual life and its experiences.* Higher spiritual phenomena and experiences are no more to be denied, as actual, albeit inward and hidden, realities than any others of a more concrete order. There is an actual spiritual life which the visible creation can neither reveal nor share. This spiritual life is, no doubt, a great mystery, just as the vegetable or animal life is. We may not be able to define exactly *what* it is, nor *how* it is in itself, but who can deny *that* it is, any more in the one case than in the other? Like ordinary animal, vegetable, mental, or other life, spiritual life may be known and demonstrated by its phenomena or manifestations.

And, like all other life, the spiritual Christian life may be expressed in paradoxical form. 'Ye are dead,' says an apostle,[1] 'and your

[1] Coloss. iii. 3.

life is hid with Christ in God.' It seems and sounds a contradiction—'ye are *dead*, and your *life*'—but it is the contradiction or paradox of all life. 'Ye are dead' in this case 'to sin,' but 'alive unto righteousness.' Ye are dead or comparatively indifferent now to sin's pleasures and deceitful promises; dead alike to its guilt, curse, domination, and fascinating spell, because you are now alive and awake to the delights and influences of other and very different pleasures, pursuits, and prospects. Faith, and hope, and love have been aroused and called forth to objects worthy of their best efforts. A new and better life throbs and thrills within your being; and you have experiences now that detach you from the mere lust of visible and material things, however good and desirable in their own proper place and measure, but that must not for a moment come into known and felt competition with the Christ of God and His claims and calls. You see now things very different from before; you hear another voice; you respond to another set of influences; in a word, you have awakened to a new and other life, a 'life that is hid with Christ in God.'

And, like all life, this life is invisible—'hid with Christ'—finding its source and origin, its

sustenance and supplies, its supports and satisfactions, in an invisible Christ. What a gain to such a life and to its experiences is to be found and felt in the very invisibleness of Christ, Whom we no longer seek to know after the flesh, but after the spirit! 'Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet henceforth know we Him so no more.'

(ii) *The invisible source and origin of spiritual life and experience.* Thus *spiritual life*, like all other kinds of life which we know, is necessarily *hid in its source and origin*, so that an invisible Christ, far from derogating from its reality, is rather a guarantee and assured aid toward its birth. The most real of all realities, and the most potent and resistless of all forces, even ordinary life itself in its beginnings, entirely eludes our outward gaze and search, scientific or otherwise.

Coming as we do into this world endowed with the life by virtue of which we hear, see, think, feel, will, and act, we know it in its manifest evidences and the palpable proofs it affords of its reality, but we are baffled in every attempt to descry its fontal secret or peer with outward eye upon its rise. Only we may note how the idea that life alone can produce life or that there is no life but

from antecedent life—is that scientific doctrine of *biogenesis* now triumphant along the whole line of modern inquiry, as it has ever been a foremost deliverance of the revealing word of God, Who 'breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.' So the seal of silence was long ago broken; and we find it repeated in the now easily believable word, 'Because I live, ye shall live also.'

And as physical life and activity begin with physical birth, so spiritual life begins with spiritual birth. 'Except a man be born again [or, *from above*], he cannot see the kingdom of God.' So Jesus, at the very outset of His conversation with Nicodemus, starts from this first beginning, '*Marvel not that I said unto thee, You must be born again.*' And the reason of this vital necessity is at once given, '*Because that which is born of the flesh is flesh,*' and only '*whatever is born of the spirit is spirit.*' Not that this spiritual change is a change in the substance, constitution, or structure of the spirit, any more than our physical birth infers a change in the substance or structure of the yet unborn body. It is a divinely effected and entire change in the whole disposition and bent of the inner nature, creating and awaking new

tastes, new cravings, new views, new habits—in a word, new life and a new state of being. Not any mere refined unfolding or development of the nature by mental culture or moral training, but the implanting of a new seed or germinal principle of a higher and better style of life.

Just as when the creeping caterpillar has to leave its earthly fare and find its food in the nectar of flowers, it not only undergoes a wonderful metamorphosis in its state and condition, but there are implanted at the same time in its being new instincts, tastes, and habits that make it play in harmony with its new sphere. It is life—the same and yet not the same—no longer the creeping caterpillar life, but it is seen to be the new insect life with wings and flying power quite different from what it was in its former condition.

And when people say, 'There, that is life,' they can only point to visible proofs or manifestations of it, but never to the hidden mystic thing itself. A child strips leaf after leaf from a rose-bud, but never comes to the vital force, the secret life of the rose. You may see the living sap rising in the tree and find its results in leaf and blossom, but the life itself eludes you. Life is everywhere the shyest of things.

'The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth, so is every one born that is born of the Spirit.' Who can catch the auspicious moment when the new life starts into being, or at what moment the Spirit breathes invisibly, secretly, yet effectively into the soul? Men may know when perhaps they first became conscious of new views and convictions, spiritual feelings, desires, aspirations, and resolves—these are but the tokens and evidences that speak of the presence of life.

And as many know not and had no consciousness of *the date or hour* of their actual birth—for at best this is but a matter of testimony by others—yet they may be sure themselves, and can furnish to others ample and unmistakable evidences of the fact and reality of their being alive, so may many furnish evidences of the life of the Spirit within them clear and cogent, yet 'cannot tell' by what acts or at what moment the soft and invisible breathing of the Spirit first set up or initiated the new spring-time of Divine life in the soul.

(iii) *The invisible method and agency in true Christian life and experience.* All agree that

both the agent and the means He employs are invisible and spiritual. If we are 'born of the Spirit,' we are no less 'born again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the *word* of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.' Similarly it is said, 'Unless a man be born of *water* and of the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' We cannot think this is the water of baptism, but rather that the water here referred to and the water of Christian baptism refer to a third thing with which Nicodemus was familiar, and of which Jesus immediately proceeds to afford an explanation. To every intelligent and devout Jew water was the name for the cleansing power, ceremonially, of the sin-offering or sacrifice of propitiation and atonement when applied to the individual. Hence our Lord immediately goes on to explain the connection between this birth by 'water and the Spirit,' and His own expiation for sin, 'As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man also be lifted up, that whosoever *believeth in Him* should . . . *have* everlasting *life*.'

There is not, never has been, never can be, this life Divine in any soul, apart from Christ's cross or atoning death. Jesus makes this

plain to Nicodemus in letting him know 'how a man can be born anew when he is old.' The living water, the real water of life, can never be dissociated in its spring and source from His own uplifting on the cross. If you *must* be born again, not less '*must* the Son of Man be lifted up.' Thence flows the regenerative power or quickening element that becomes the 'well of water springing up into everlasting life.' And it is the truth concerning Christ's atoning and righteousness-procuring death that in the hand of the Spirit is the effective instrument for producing this life, as it is the one alone channel along which the agency of the Spirit is sent forth. All spiritual life flows from Christ's atoning death, and we can 'only have life through His name.' We are born again thus by the *water* of the *Word*—by the efficacy of Christ's own blood in its sin-cleansing, life-imparting virtue, when applied through the Word by the quickening Spirit. For while life comes from Christ alone, it is the Spirit that quickeneth; for the Spirit alone imparteth or giveth life by directly and immediately bringing the individual soul into living contact and union with a life-bringing Saviour. All this is effected in the simple receiving of the truth,

as it is symbolically set forth in baptism, the very model and exemplification as it is of the method of unition to Christ. So baptism is salvation as in a figure, through the double cure of Christ's work and the Spirit's agency.

The power used and called into play by the life-giving regenerating Spirit is never in Scripture represented as the water of baptism, but always as that third thing, of which the water in baptism and the water of which Jesus spake to Nicodemus alike speak—the life-giving virtue of Christ's expiatory work as applied through faith in the truth of the Gospel by the Holy Ghost, whose office must never be dissociated or divorced from that one source of spiritual or eternal life in Christ, Who alone is 'our life.'

(iv) *The invisible support and nutriment of this life.* It is maintained on invisible supplies and sustenance. It can draw upon upper invisible resources, as the water-spider, which cannot depend on the water alone in the midst of which it lives and moves and does its work, can come to the surface, and by a wonderful operation of its breathing apparatus can lay hold upon a portion of atmosphere and carry the globule along with it under

the water till the supply is exhausted, when it goes up for more. For a necessary condition to every kind of life is a constant supply of appropriate sustenance and nutriment. Vegetable and animal life are both subject to this law. No vegetable life can thrive nor long subsist without suitable soil, sunshine, rain, and atmosphere. No animal life can go on without its own sustaining supplies. The mind must have its food and the heart must have its nourishment. Much more the spiritual life requires its own special nourishment, or it must die. It feeds by faith on the invisible Saviour, Who says, 'And because I live, ye shall live also.' What light, and soil, and moisture are to plant-life, what bread is to our own physical being, that Christ is to the spiritual nature—absolutely indispensable.

It is the truth as it is in Jesus—all the truth in Him into which the Spirit leads us—that is *the* nutriment to our souls.

It is not so much the doctrines, but Himself —Who is the very truth in all His doctrine— Whom the Spirit leads us to understand and graciously appreciate and appropriate. To be a real or spiritual Christian is not, therefore, simply to assent to certain doctrines, but to

receive Christ Himself Whom the doctrines set forth and enclose. How possible for us to be conversant with Christian doctrine, to have a clear apprehension of the scheme of redemption and the whole of the theoretic ideas of saving truth, and be able to give even an exact statement of these in all their parts and relations, and yet not be feeding the soul upon the Christ that is in them! There is a difference between the intellectually perceiving of the truth and the sanctifyingly and savingly receiving of it. Truth is to be welcomed not simply as a pleasant object of thought, but as a living and life-nourishing power. It is not only to be a light to the eye, but a lamp to the path; not only something to gaze at or inquire into, but to entertain, utilize, and turn to saving and spiritual account.

For the Spirit Who commends Christ Jesus to the soul is the 'Spirit of truth,' Who creates and awakens a passion for truth and a love for the truth, and Who detaches and withdraws us from the kingdom of deceit and from all the evil and tricky devices familiar to him that has been a liar from the beginning.

And the method used by the Spirit of truth is not driving or forcing, but 'leading,'

'guiding,' by winning ways and by persistently pointing to the truth and commendingly interpreting it. When we gaze upon a picture we may for ourselves see much that is beautiful and attractive in its mode of exhibiting colour, form, and expression. But to understand the inner meaning of the picture and appreciate its main purpose and idea, we may need some skilled interpreter to open our eyes to its most vital and inherent excellencies. The Holy Spirit is such a guide to the Saviour and such an interpreter and revealer of the true grace and glory of Jesus Christ in His purpose and mission into this world.

It is He Who illumines the mind by casting fresh and interesting light upon the truth; it is He Who opens the eyes to the true meaning and aims of Christ's words and work by furnishing insight into them, and not only enabling us to realize their true inwardness, but their vital importance—giving an attractiveness to them and a fascinating interest in them to our yearning and wondering heart and mind. He warms the nature into enthusiastic love and attachment to 'truth,' and He makes the truth itself glow with a new lustre to the enraptured nature, just as in making a deep and abiding impression we may heat both the

wax and the stamp itself in applying the sealing power. And so the mind gets 'filled with sacred truth, the heart with sacred fire,' at one and the same moment and by one and the same means.

All the truth that the Spirit uses is already set forth in Jesus, in His life and work, in His character and death. 'I am the truth,' says Jesus; but He also says, 'He, the Spirit of truth, shall teach you.' For we need an inward vision, a spiritual discernment, a sanctified purpose, without which the veil remains unremoved from our heart. This spiritual Teacher brings no new truth of His own, nor does He speak and testify of Himself, but He keeps Himself rather in the background, and does not withdraw our attention to Himself; His one aim being to present, recommend, and glorify Christ the Lord.

Thus Christ's words which are received as containing Himself become spirit and life to our souls. 'I am the living bread which came down out of heaven, and by your feeding on My atoning sacrifice, My flesh is bread indeed, and My blood drink indeed,' and then all our acts are acts of faith in Him as One sacrificed for us. Believe on Him, and thus thou eatest. And so it is written, 'This is the will of My

Father, that every one that believeth on Me shall have eternal life.'[1]

(v) *The experimental witness of this invisible spiritual life.* There are certain blessings received from the conscious exercise and forth-putting of the powers of this life, of which all who are partakers are more or less aware. In proportion as they walk in the Spirit and live in the Spirit they have a witness within themselves that they are born of God; they enjoy a spirit of adoption whereby they think of and speak to God as their reconciled Father, Whom they reverence and obey, but of Whom they do not stand in terror, so long as they do what is pleasing in His sight. Their state is one of living, loving union and communion with their Lord, to Whose fulness they have access, and out of which they are continually being replenished. The more they draw on Him for holiness, peace, comfort, and joy, they find the more in Him to draw upon. Like the rooted vine-stem, He alone contains and conveys the fruitful and fructifying sap. They are to be so branched in Him as not to have a mere outward or nominal connection, but a fruitful and vital one—the whole fibres and vesicles

[1] John vi. 40.

of their spiritual nature striking deep down into the hidden fibres and vesicles of His being, so that the sap of His grace shall pass over into them, and not only they abide in Him, but in such a sense as that He shall be found also abiding and working in them. This is His real, albeit spiritual presence within us.

Here are the springs of all holy instincts, dispositions, and activities, whereby we are delivered from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. The spirit of a holy life is never detached from evangelical impulses and principles, from entireness of self-surrender and self-consecration. Thus the Spirit helps us to realize Christ's constant, inward, abiding presence, and He brings in upon us the comforting and hallowing assurance of the Divine love and favour, according as we are living and walking in the Spirit and getting filled with the Holy Ghost, the Comforter.

To attain to some measure of this assurance —an assurance of knowledge, of faith, and of hope—is a matter of duty no less than of privileged experience. Realizing in themselves some unmistakable fruits of the Spirit, such as 'joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance,'

they feel entitled, without being chargeable with any vain confidence, to appropriate and apply to themselves such words of personal conviction as, 'The Lord is *My* Shepherd,' 'Thou knowest that *I* love *Thee*,' or, 'I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded He is able to keep that for me which I have committed to His trust.' The very sting of death is extracted, and its terrors no longer keep the soul in thrall. So the dying saint, falling back at last as at first into the arms of a glorified Redeemer, breathes out His soul in fidelity, meekness, and hope, saying in fearless triumph, 'Into Thy hands I commend my spirit.'

(vi) *The working tests of this invisible life.* Life must sooner or later show itself and become aware of itself by suitable efforts and visible evidences and manifestations. It is Christ Himself Who is the final touchstone here. How we stand related to Him in our character and conduct, in our principles and practice, is the determining factor. We must submit to have applied to us by ourselves and others those tests demanded as requisites by which all the world may know whether or not our disposition and life be truly Christian. No man can own and take Jesus for his Lord

save in the Holy Ghost. It is one of the main purposes for which the invisible Saviour is revealed in this word, that we may make Him as there exhibited the one supreme gauge and standard of our being, whereby to try ourselves and judge of the reality of our spiritual life.

For it is only as Christ thus made known to us becomes the supreme truth and light to our minds, the supreme authority to our consciences, the supreme master to our wills, the supreme object to our love and affections, and the supreme joy and rejoicing to our hearts, that we are entitled to conclude that we are born of His Spirit and have Himself by His Spirit abiding in us. If I take Him to be my Lord and Master, the final law of my being, with supreme right to order and command and with supreme title to my obedience—whose voice I hear and habitually follow; to Whom alone I flee for all He offers to do and be to me as my Saviour, my prophet, priest, and king; Whom I worship and adore in my inmost heart; to Whom above all else I cleave and heartily yield myself; and Whom I implicitly trust and serve with integrity of purpose, in spite of my own manifold and multiplied wickednesses, blind stumblings, and sad short-

comings, then may I conclude myself to be in living contact with the Spirit of Christian light and life, of love and liberty. Christ thus ruling in us is the one sure test of the Spirit's presence in power. This is the only true religion, this is the only vital godliness, this is the only positive Christianity—we so in Christ as that He is abiding in us the power and principle of the higher life and the hope of everlasting glory.

Then may we hopefully assure both ourselves and others that the Lord Jesus Christ is with us and in us of a truth, the true and supreme object of our faith, our hope and our love. For the one main line along which the Holy Spirit operates in our spirits effectually is by calling into daily exercise the three great sovereign graces that befit and adorn the spiritual experience. To keep us close to Christ and Christ close to us, is the constant effort and highest triumph of the Spirit of God in us as against the world, the flesh, and the devil. Associated with the invisible Redeemer in ineffable union, we by faith draw upon the past in all He has done and suffered for us; and while realizing the blessed hope of His final appearing as a great fact which we import into the present, we wait, watch, and work for Him.

Occupying till He come, and acting as stewards for Him in His absence, and guardians of His credit, honour, and goods, we lovingly sanctify Him in our hearts, and are ready ever to give faithful attendance on His service. So may I conclude humbly yet confidently that I am verily His and He is mine for evermore.

PART III

CHAPTER I

THE GAIN TO FAITH

The childlike faith that asks not sight,
Nor seeks for wonder or for sign,
Believes because it loves aright,
Shall see things greater, things Divine.

Jesus Christ, in Whom, though at present you cannot see, you nevertheless believe . . . securing the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.—1 *Pet.* i. 8, 9.

Jesus saith: *Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.*—*John* xx. 29.

CHAPTER I

THE GAIN TO FAITH

'SEEING is believing,' but it is not believing much. To believe only what we see or only because we see it, would be an enormous restriction on common knowledge, and would cut us off from vast territories of the real and knowable. For, after all, the most important part of our knowledge respects what we believe, not what we see.

The things in daily life we get at by believing apart from the evidence of sight are far more in number and momentousness than those of which we can claim the evidence of our own eyesight.

And Jesus here declares the blessedness of attaining belief in Himself without making any demand on the evidence that depends on our own individual outer eyesight for confirmation or assurance.

Before dealing, however, with the warrant

or ground for believing in Him without having seen Him, or the blessed contents which such faith alone can enjoyably experience, or the happy fruits of it upon others, we may consider briefly (i) the *nature of such believing in Jesus as is here commanded.*

Believing in Jesus is *putting trust in Him* to be and to do for us what He says. Such trust is not a mere exercise of the intellect, though it starts with and necessarily implies that. But it is no less an exercise of conscience and heart, for trust is impossible without ethical emotion; and it further involves choice and exercise of the renewed will. There are difficulty and ambiguity and variety in the meaning or application of all very significant words, just because of the impossibility of putting into language all the marvellous phases of delicate thought of which the mind is capable. Hence the varieties of meaning attached or attachable to such a word as faith or belief. Sometimes it means simply believing, or *intelligently accepting* what *is true*; but sometimes it means much more—it means trust, confidingness, reliance. For example, 'Thou *believest* there is one God . . . the devils also believe

this, and tremble,'[1] and 'Jesus did not *trust* [commit] Himself unto them . . . for He knew what was in man.'[2] It is the same word in the original, but 'believing' and 'trusting,' though right translations of the very same term, have not and cannot have the same significance in the above two passages. One while it means simply *belief, credit,* or *assent* to what is accepted as true; but in another connection it goes farther, and signifies *trust, affiance, confidingness.* Belief is simply in itself an exercise of the intellect. But trust, though necessarily including that, is an exercise of the whole moral nature; it is an exercise of heart and conscience, and no less also of will.

In old English the word belief was used in both senses; but now it is confined to the sense merely of intellectual credit or assent, except it be followed by *in* or *on.* Thus believing Christ is assenting to what He says: but believing *in* or *on* Him is really trust or reliance. There is a great difference between these two states of mind. Belief is a simple intellectual condition: a mere method of attaining knowledge where seeing with the outward eye is not within

[1] James ii. 19. [2] John ii. 24, 25.

our reach. Most of our knowledge respects what we believe, and not what we see. We believe, for example, that William IV. reigned just before Queen Victoria, and that the orbit of the earth is elliptical. But trust is more than belief of what we deem true; it is a *desire* for what we deem good for us, and a *choice* of what we deem right for us to choose. We may believe a great deal that is true, for example, of a physician; but not feeling we need him, we do not seek or desire his services, and do not entrust ourselves as patients to him. We may believe that a plank across a stream is strong enough to bear our weight, that it has been put there for our use, and that we are welcome to use it for crossing; but until we desire to cross and choose actually to cross, we do not *trust* the plank; we trust it not until we in fact use it and commit ourselves to it.

So Christ addresses Himself not simply to the intellect, but to the conscience, affections, and will—to the whole of our personal responsible being. In short, there are doctrines and truths to be believed, promised blessings to be desired and chosen, and precepts and injunctions to be given heed to and heartily

obeyed and observed. 'This is the will of Him that sent Me,' says Jesus Himself, 'that every one who sees the Son [not outwardly, but with inward believing eye of intelligent understanding and appreciation] and trusts Him should have eternal life.' 'This is the work of God [that is, the SERVICES *which God requires*] that you trust to Him Whom He hath sent.' Thus 'without faith it is impossible to please God'—and indeed, as already said, it were the greatest insult to a fellow man to tell him you do not believe in him; you have no faith in him; you do not trust him. And so we are prepared for this great word, 'Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have trusted'—that is, they who *credit the truth* as it is in Jesus, who desire and delight in the redemptive good He contains and conveys, and who commit themselves to and rely on Him for salvation and its benefits.

(ii) Similarly the word 'blessed' has three closely related yet distinctive applications or shades of meaning.

(*a*) *Worthy of praise*, as when we say, 'Blessed be the name of the Lord.'

(*b*) *Accounted happy*, as when we say, 'Blessed are all they who trust in Him.'

(*c*) *Made a blessing*, as when we speak of the *blessed* hope (Titus ii. 13).

In all these senses are they blessed whose trust in Christ stands independent of His visible appearance—whose faith is grounded on better evidence than sight can furnish, appropriates grander things than sight can take in, and attains a power for good which sight cannot furnish.

The first meaning has to do with the *ground or warrant* of faith, the second with its *contents*, and the third with the *results and products*. *Worthy of praise* are they who require no outward sight of Christ to justify or warrant their faith in Him. To be *accounted happy* are they who have got hold of blessings in Christ beyond anything that outer sight can descry. And what *sources and channels of blessing* are they whose faith toward Christ stands not in any material basis, but is rooted and settled in an inward experience of the things of Christ!

(*a*) *Worthy to be praised.* A faith worthy to be honoured and fit to be commended and accepted is a faith which seeks assurance for itself, not in the region of outward sight at all, but of moral and spiritual insight.

The blessedness here spoken of is not the

prize of a lofty intellect or a shrewd mental apprehension, but of a sound conscience, or a good and honest heart. A right intent and not a vast capacity is the true test and gauge of praiseworthiness in such a case. A faith based on moral considerations chiefly is the blessed faith commended here. This faith needs no ocular demonstration, for it grows out of attention to plain and simple moral evidence, on which it mainly leans, and on which it lays most stress. And therefore, as such faith requires an action of the moral nature or involves an operation of conscience and will, it is deserving of honour and commendation.

There is of course a faith to which no moral worth at all attaches; a faith for which a man is no more accountable than for his height or the colour of his skin; a faith purely instinctive, irresistible, unavoidable, and involuntary, which a man cannot help, and for which he is not answerable, but to the exercise of which no credit belongs.

'I believe only where there is no room for doubt,' said one friend to another; to which his neighbour replied, 'But there is no credit in that; for you believe only what you cannot help believing, and where not believing would

mean simple idiocy or intellectual imbecility.' No praise is due to one who believes any self-evident or undeniable truth—such as two and two make four, or the whole is greater than a part. Great censure, no doubt, would be incurred by any one playing fast and loose with such convictions; by any one, for instance, who being assured that two and two are four, should from self-interest, deceit, or greed of gain act as if they might make three or five. And why? Why, but because in such a case the moral nature comes into play, and faithlessness to conviction is the worst form of dishonest unbelief.

Now, gospel evidence, like all gospel truth, carries in its bosom a moral element that tests men's moral nature or disposition; and praise attaches to those who honour this evidence by yielding to it, and loyally accepting it.

The idea of belief meriting praise involves, however, no suggestion that it merits salvation; for a criminal may deserve praise for telling the truth about his crime, without in any way deserving pardon or immunity from the punishment he has righteously incurred.

But blessed in the sense of worthy of honour are they who have faced the moral evidence to which Christ primarily appeals,

and who have conscientiously weighed and examined it, and have acted accordingly. For Christ Himself is His own best evidence; and He presents Himself to men's *consciences* as He did at Pilate's bar, requiring to be judged according to the evidence. For Jesus ever pays homage to the laws of evidence; He makes no demand on our belief apart from the evidence, and is no patron of any blind, unwarrantable, groundless, or unreasoning faith.

In all matters of reported or recorded fact, or of historic inquiry, it is to be borne in mind there is only kind of proof possible; not deductive proof, as in mathematics, nor inductive proof, as in natural science, but only testamentary proof, as in a court of law. It is easy to compel belief in the case of mathematical demonstration—as, for instance, the three angles of any triangle are equal to two right angles. For a man to deny such demonstration would only show him to be intellectually imbecile or idiotic. So in science we verify anything by actual or visible experiment, as when we would demonstrate that oxygen and hydrogen under certain conditions combine to form water. But if any man deny facts reported of Napoleon or Cromwell, the only way of proving them is by calling witnesses or adducing testimony.

In this case there is room for the exercise of the moral nature. Much more is this so when the narrative concerns one like Jesus Christ, Who makes great claims, and Who demands implicit trust and reliance. He is to be attested and made known by what He *says*, what He *does*, and what He *is*—the evidence for the truth of His claims appealing primarily and supremely to *moral* considerations.

For He rests the truth and validity of His claims as '*the* sent of God' mainly on that kind of evidence which 'tries the hearts and reins of the children of men,' and which, at the same time, is most accessible, most easily understood, and most trenchantly conclusive. For where there is moral evidence it is always adequate for conviction in itself.

We may not disparage any available evidence whatever, and Christ's claims are to be weighed and examined along very varied lines, external and internal, inductive and deductive, historical and experimental, and the like. For He comes before us as a great historic person, to be appraised and appreciated on the lines of historical investigation, but chiefly as a divinely sent, divinely attested, divinely qualified, and Divine Saviour, whose claims require no long, learned, recondite

trains of argument, however much they may admit of it; assurance here depending not on critical subtleties or finely spun philosophizings, but on certain plain and direct moral considerations, open alike to all, from the humblest to the highest.

'There are three,' says the Apostle John, 'that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood,' or, in other words, as we conceive it, Christ's *own attested character*; His *adaptation to man's deepest needs*, which any one can put to the proof for himself, just as any one can assure himself of wholesome food without chemical or other analysis; and finally, His *matchlessly good and gracious effects* and influences on human nature.

Now, of all evidence this is the most simple, direct, and valid; and no visibleness of Christ could add to its weight or help us in any way to appreciate its cogency and conclusiveness. Rather is Christ's invisibleness an advantage, as it helps to shut up faith to this best and surest of all grounds. Blessed and to be praised are they who take hold upon this threefold cord of evidence, and who feel the force of this triple form of moral witness-bearing. For with heart and conscience, and not with the eye, must we see the virtue of it, and

recognize the validity and justice of Christ's claims, apart altogether from what sight can supply.

(*b*) *Securely and consciously happy.* Passing, however, from the warrant, we come to the contents of faith or trust in Christ. For it is not faith itself, but only what of Christ our faith holds that makes us blessed or gives us guarantees or security for happiness; just as it is not the glass, but the water it contains, that refreshes us or slakes our thirst. For faith is like the cup or vessel, whose chief worth consists in what it holds.

If we are to be blessed with all saving blessings in Christ Jesus, faith must entertain far more in Him than the eye can discern or ever appropriate. It is not with the outward eye we learn to see in Jesus what will constrain the soul to put its trust in Him. His *saving* functions are never conveyed by outward gazing. Many saw Him daily who never believed on Him, nor wished to do so. Many saw Him who had their antipathy stirred and their indifference and animosity strengthened. It is not through the bodily eye that Jesus fulfils His promise, 'I will manifest *Myself* unto you.'

Outward sight here is no help, rather a

hindrance. The warmth of the sun does not come through sight. Blind people have the same, or at least equally strong, proof and evidence of its genial, vitalizing, health-giving rays as those who see. No physical vision contributes anything to this experience; and there is no need of eyesight to reach the assurance that Jesus, Whom we have found, or rather has found us, is the selfsame Jesus Whom we find manifesting Himself in His words and works and ways as these are disclosed to us in the Gospels. Faith in Him cometh by hearing—that is, not by hearsay, but by '*giving heed*' to Himself, in what He *says* and *does*, and in the spirit and mode of His saying and doing it—that is, in showing what He really *is*. 'Now we believe,' said the Samaritans to the woman, 'not because of thy saying, but because we have heard [or given heed to] Him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.'

If we are ever to have faith in Christ, we must look on Him with other eyes than those of sense. The faith in Christ that alone can make us blessed must be faith in Him for what He distinctively and exclusively is, the one and only Saviour from our sins. It is

as the Saviour we must believe in Him; and outward looking at Him can afford no help here at all. But just as when we see any object the eye requires the medium of the luminous atmosphere, without which it discerns nothing, so faith can only discern Christ through the truth, the one medium whereby alone it can realize Him as He actually and truly is. For faith is a method of knowledge where other methods are not available. What a strange delusion to suppose that believing has to do somehow with religion only! *There*, no doubt, it holds its loftiest seat, and *there* it reaches its highest scope and exercise. But what can be simpler or more universally used than faith? Is it not involved and presupposed in every act of any limited form of intelligence?

No one can live mentally without faith, any more than physically without breath. How can we have knowledge at all, or how can there be any science whatever without faith? For what is faith, if not the connecting link between knowing and being? And all faith is the same, considered as a process of our minds: it is receiving or accepting something as true on some testimony or other.

The object which faith embraces is, for

higher life, of as serious moment as what the lungs breathe is for our lower physical life. If what we believe be false, it is like poisonous air to the lungs; if it be true, it is as blessed and wholesome to our higher being as a pure atmosphere is to our bodily wellbeing.[1]

Now, believing in Jesus is receiving or accepting the Divine truth or testimony regarding Him; and here sight is of no avail. The chief parts of that testimony are these: That for our state of sin and misery we each need a Saviour; that Christ is the only Saviour we need; that we must put our trust in Him voluntarily, yet not without the help of Divine grace, the entreated aid of God's own Spirit; and that every sinner is commanded, warranted, and welcome to do so. Hence the faith which alone brings blessedness to the soul is not a mere assent to much that is true about Christ,

[1] Faith even in its lower forms is one of the most potent powers for influencing alike both body and mind. On its higher levels, and when exercised on Christ as the source of ineffable goodness, power, and love, it proves itself a healing, exhilarating, and curative force of the first order. Like every other part of the Christian disposition, a well-balanced and duly exercised Christian faith is an aid to mental and physical health, and is a state of mind of immense serviceableness in patients under medical treatment, and is one of the best of prophylactics. In adverting to faith's healing power and function (not, of course, apart from use of physical means and remedies), we are but following the primitive Church usage and teaching, and are in the line of very well ascertained experience and of easily verifiable fact.

but it is trust in Himself as our own Saviour. It is receiving and believing in all the truth that will be needed to shut us up into a reception of, and reliance on, Him alone for salvation. For it is the Saviour alone that saves. 'Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.' A bodily sight of Christ is one thing, a believing trust in Christ is wholly another and independent thing.

Blessed are they whose faith attaches to what in Him no eyesight can reach, and who by believingly embracing Him in all His saving offices and functions secure in Him the full benefits and experiences of His benign and blood-bought salvation, with all the exhaustless pleasures and treasures He alone contains and conveys. 'In Whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.'

It is only through a faith which thus virtually embraces and unites us to Christ our Saviour that we secure the Divine forgiveness and favour, peace of conscience, the comfortable sense of Divine love in our souls, the gracious benefits of God's Spirit, the impartation of the life Divine with its many happy

experiences, such as true abiding and cheerful hope toward God, the filial relationship and the disposition to call God our Father, the privileged position and freedom of children, with all its glorious deliverance from slavish terror, bitter remorse, and fearful forebodings, the sense of power over evil and of sufficient aid to help in every time of need according to our requirements, the good hope through heavenly grace, and all the other benign benefits of Christ's mediation, and of His saving functions and offices as our Redeemer—the Lord and sustainer of life's goodness and blessedness both now and hereafter, whereby we find the good of His chosen and are made glad with all His heritage.

(*c*) *Instrumental in blessing others.* Having set forth the warrant for and the blessed contents of trusting in Jesus without needing to see Him, we are now to exhibit the supreme efficiency of such a faith. For while, no doubt, as the proverb says, 'Seeing is believing,' yet because it is not believing much, there is never much pith or power of serving others in such believing.

It is chiefly a faith which 'asks not sight' that can exhibit self-sacrificing devotion to the claims of others in any marked degree.

For this order of faith involves far nobler exercises of mind and will, of heart and conscience, than any faith that rests on sight. For it grasps facts not as isolated things, but in their principle and significance. Even scientific faith, when it grasps realities not in their outer appearance, but in their inward meaning and bearing, how it becomes clothed with new power and serviceableness! The mere sight of an apple falling to the ground did no effective work for science till Newton caught in it its connection with the hidden powers and processes of gravitation, and descried that—

> The selfsame law which moulds a tear,
> And bids it trickle from its source,
> That law preserves the earth a sphere,
> And keeps the planets in their course.

Then with what new leaps and bounds did science move forward! Fresh modes of investigation were tried, and fresh fields of discovery were opened up. A faith bound to sight or bounded by sight has little or no tendency to urge men's thoughts to further issues. In like manner how feeble and unserviceable were Christ's disciples while they realized and understood Him chiefly after the flesh! But when under the baptism of God's

Spirit their faith grasped Him according to 'the truth that is in Jesus,' what different men they showed themselves! *Then* they began 'to subdue kingdoms, to work righteousness, to quench the violence of fire, to defy the edge of the sword: out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, and put to flight whole armies of the alien.'

So faith receiving Christ in all His saving offices and benefits is no mere solitary act. It is a ceaselessly operative principle, introducing us into fellowship with Him, and producing in us spiritual affinity with Him also. This is the faith that works, and works by love, and is full of all good fruits. It may be small as a grain of mustard-seed; but, like that grain of mustard-seed, which by virtue of the living force in it, pushing aside or surmounting obstacles far larger than itself, and coming to the surface in spite of soil, roots, stones, and other hindrances, faith removes mountains in its conquering course and casts them into the sea, acting like the resistless breath of spring, when it bursts the frosts of winter and propels all Nature into bud and leaf and flower. Christian faith is not an opinion only, or some barren intellectual notion; it is conviction, vital conviction, of 'the truth as it

is in Jesus,' which carries the whole of our nature with it. And truth is always the correspondence of our nature with reality. Necessary truth is its correspondence with self-evident propositions; scientific truth its correspondence with the phenomena of Nature; mental truth with our mental phenomena; moral truth with moral law, or the correspondence of our words and ways with our inner thoughts; religious truth the correspondence of our conceptions with Divine revelation, and Christian truth their correspondence with Christ's manifestation of visible and eternal realities.

It is this faith in Him that makes Christianity a religion, and not a philosophy, a spiritual religion, and not a speculation, profession, or ritual; a vital personal religion, and not a tradition or argumentative exercise. If science has to do with the sequences of phenomena, and philosophy with their causes, this faith of Christ has to do with persons. It is a personal faith in a personal Saviour. Planting Christ in its central place, and gathering round Him the loftiest personal sentiments, gratitude, admiration, adoring regard, hope, love, paramount devotion, and obedience, it touches the deepest springs of our

being, and causes the tide of our Christianized nature to gush out in perennial streams of Christ-like beneficence and goodwill, till 'the wilderness and solitary place be made glad for them, and the moral deserts to rejoice and blossom as the rose.'

How patient and persistent a force for abiding in love and persevering in all well-doing is this faith! What an antidote it presents to all despondency, indolence, indifference, and slackness! Think of Moses, how conspicuous among the heroes of faith, and how he endured, because seeing Him Who is invisible! How he confronts Pharaoh, not fearing the wrath of the king! How he persists against all difficulties and obstacles! How he becomes the liberator and law-giver of his people by faith! How he endures the fractious temper and misdoing of the tribes, the jealousies and envies of brother and sister, and the rebellious spirit of the sacerdotal order and its uprising against his greater prophetic status!

It was no mere mystical rapture, this faith of his. It meant laborious, anxious, and loyal service for forty years. He endured as seeing Him Who is invisible. He looked at things seen as but the window of things

yet unseen beyond ; and he dealt with passing events as but signs and symbols for heralding what were as yet impalpable realities in store.

It is ever so with every real or ethical faith ; it carries the whole forces of our being with it, and yokes them to persistent and persevering service in the interest alike of God and man. This is the faith that works, that works by love, and is full of all good and fruitful service both for God and man. 'As faithless works the Lord will not reward, so workless faith the Lord will not regard.'

CHAPTER II

THE GAIN TO HOPE

Man is, properly speaking, based upon hope; he has no other possession but hope.—*Sartor Resartus*, ii. 7.

> Hope springs eternal in the human breast:
> Man never is, but always to be blest.
> The soul uneasy and confined from home,
> Rests and expatiates in a life to come.
>
> POPE, *Epistle* i. 95–98.

> Hope, like the gleaming taper's light,
> Adorns and cheers the way;
> And still as darker grows the night,
> Emits a brighter ray.
>
> GOLDSMITH, *The Captivity.*

> As some adventurous flower,
> On savage cragside grown,
> Seems nourished hour by hour
> From its wild self alone;
> So lives inveterate Hope on her own hardihood.
>
> WILLIAM WATSON.

We shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.—1 *John* iii. 2, 3.

CHAPTER II

THE GAIN TO HOPE

Hope is the expectation of what we deem desirable. It is not expectation by itself nor desire by itself, but it is a union of the two. Thus we expect pain, misfortune, disease, or death; but we cannot be said to hope for them, because we do not desire them. And there are things which we may desire, but we cannot be said to hope for them, because we do not expect them.

Hope is therefore in part faith, and in part love. So far as it looks to the future and expects some unseen good, it is faith; and so far as it desires such future good it is love.

The combination is apparent in the present context. 'Behold!' says the Apostle—here is an appeal to our *faith*, and no less an appeal to our love—for, 'behold, what manner of *love* the Father hath bestowed on us.' And the

outcome of both is this *hope* as an uplifting and purifying influence.

(i) Had the Apostle been desirous of setting forth the Father's love in its greatness and cost, he would have referred to the gift and surrender of His only-begotten and well-beloved Son. But referring as he does here to its spirit and aim, to its manner and quality, rather than to its mere measure, he lays emphasis and stress on its object and design in that He is calling us, even us, to be His sons; and not to be so in name only, but in nature, not in outward semblance, but in deed and in truth.

The world does not, of course, appreciate and sets little or no store by such a high or privileged character and position; its ambitions lie not in that direction. It 'recognizeth us not.' How should it, when it neither knew nor acknowledged God's own Son when He presented Himself among men? 'The world knew Him not.' It had nothing in common with Him, in spirit, method, or aim—no real or vital sympathy with Him in His redeeming plans and pursuits. 'So beautiful and attractive is Divine virtue,' said once a noted preacher, 'that were it but to appear among men, the world would fall down and worship

it!' 'No!' said his better-informed colleague, 'it did appear among men, but the world fell upon it and crucified it!' So it is still. The world appreciates us not, because it appreciated Him not. But be this privilege of Divine Sonship despised or honoured, it is not one to be relegated wholly to the future. It is a present privilege and experience, and must be entered on now and here. For now are we made sons of God, and the experiences of sonship are to be in us now or never. True, 'it doth not yet appear what we shall be.' Great and gracious as are the blessed experiences and benefits it may now afford, these furnish no adequate gauge of what sonship ultimately involves. We pick up a rag from the street, and wash and bleach it. How different from what it was! Yet the change is as nothing to what the rag may become. We send it to the paper mill, and see it torn to shreds and reduced to pulp. But it doth not yet appear what the rag may be. It is passed between hot rollers, and comes forth a sheet of pure white paper! But it doth not yet appear what the rag may be. We send it to the printing-press, and get stamped upon it 'thoughts that breathe in words that burn,' and it doth not yet appear

what the rag may be in position, in honour, or in influence!

The sons of God are 'washed, and justified, and sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.' But it doth not therefrom appear what we shall be! We have neither the power nor the gift to conclude therefrom what mightier changes in body, soul, or spirit may be wrapped up in the hidden processes of God's great redemptive laboratory. It is not yet made clear what we shall be. All, however, is not dark. One bright ray at least sheds its welcome gleam of assurance. We know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, when we see Him not as He once was, but as He is *now*—in a perfectly purified and glorified humanity, and not, as of old, in lowly and suffering form and condition. And how did the Apostle know this? How but by recalling and interpreting by the Spirit the Master's own memorable words? 'Father, I will that those whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am, to behold My glory.' 'Predestinated to be conformed to the image of His glory.' The beatific vision will complete in them the likeness to which they are now in measure conforming. This is our hope—this

is what we both desire and expect to reach. Speaking generally, the Christian hope is for a holy heaven, for glory, honour, and immortality, for an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. But more specifically it is a hope, as here expressed, that settles and fastens on Christ Himself—in His present, though unseen, most pure humanity, in body, soul, spirit, and environment. And what we are now to consider is, the beneficial effect of Christ's invisibleness upon this hope of ours to see Him and become pure in our whole human nature and condition even as He is pure.

(ii) His bodily absence meantime avails to make this hope (*α*) *possible*, (*β*) *predominant*, and (*γ*) *patiently persistent*, as a present purifying power.

(*α*) *Christ's invisibleness renders this hope possible.* It is of the essence of hope to look to 'things not seen as yet.' For, says an Apostle, 'Hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopeth for what he seeth?' Now hope in Christ is to be like Him in purity of body, mind, spirit, and state.

(1) In *bodily* purity. Not merely superficial purity, albeit cleanliness is nigh to godliness, and a part of it as well. But

purity in the very substance and structure of the organic frame. Corruption is to give place to incorruption in a body no more subject to disease, decay, or dissolution, nor capable of becoming a festering, putrid corpse, from which every sense recoils, and affection itself turns away with loathing. A body free also from every stain on its escutcheon, no longer a body of dishonour with its dark disgrace of sin and shame, but one fashioned according to the body of His glory; no longer liable to weakness, pain, or weariness, nor standing in need of rest, food, or sleep. But freed from all the requirements and necessities of animal life and condition, it shall blossom from a natural into a spiritual body—no doubt, body still, but a fit handmaid and reflection of the purified spirit, and moulded by the presence and power of the spiritual life within.

> For of the soul the body form doth take,
> For soul is form, and doth the body make.[1]

So we read, 'If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, . . . He shall also quicken your mortal bodies by *means of the Spirit that dwelleth in you.*'[2]

Ah! how much easier it is for us now to

[1] Edmund Spenser's *Hymn in Honour of Beauty.*
[2] Rom. viii. 11.

descry in the present body the workings of corrupt nature than of purifying grace; to see it expressing malice, envy, jealousy, and rage, far more clearly than love, piety, truth, or wisdom! For—

> We are spirits clad in veils,
> Man by man was never seen,
> All our close communion fails,
> To remove the shadowy screen.

Our hope is for a body to be constituted in such purity as shall unveil and express its own inherent stainlessness, and cause us to know each other even as we are known, without any intervening veil at all. It is thus the operation of the spiritual life that determines the spiritual body, just as now the natural body is the exponent of the natural life.

(2) In *intellectual* purity. We hope to be like Christ in mental purity; in minds untainted with doubt, or any other of the manifold corrupting influences to which thought is often now subject. Our very methods of knowledge, so tedious and operose, have entails of impurity about them:

> Where but to think has taste of woe,
> And leaden-eyed despair.

And an 'increase of knowledge increaseth sorrow.'

For while light in its final plenitude dispels clouds and darkness, yet in its earlier struggles it but helps to reveal the darkness and show how much of darkness there really is. Our first efforts at knowledge are but as a rushlight that conquers a small part of the surrounding darkness. To enlarge the area of light is but to enlarge the circumference of the darkness, and multiply our sense of their points of conflict. Our very knowledge is thus stained by doubt, and our every effort to communicate knowledge often adds to the blot of possible confusion and misunderstanding:

> For words, like Nature, half reveal,
> And half conceal the soul within.[1]

Or, as Dante says in his final vision:

> O speech! how feeble and how faint art thou,
> To give conception birth![2]

Our hope is not indeed ever to reach omniscience—for with all reverence be it said this incommunicable Divine attribute is no part of Christ's human intelligence, how closely soever it is knit to it—but our hope is to be so mentally near to the fount and centre of light as to see light ever clearly

[1] Tennyson, *In Memoriam*.

[2] *Paradiso*, xxxiii.

in that light, where there is no darkness at all, and where no shadows of doubt, or perplexity, or questionings can stain or pollute, as now, the bright radiance of unclouded knowledge. For, alas! in our present experience we realize that 'the brighter the light, the darker is the shadow it can cast.'

But, at last, all mere surmises and imaginings and theorizings and guessings are for ever to be at an end, and we are to become pure in our intelligence, in all its methods, processes, results, and uses, as Christ Himself is pure.

(3) In *moral* purity. In purity of inner nature, of character, spirit, and disposition. Even in sanctified humanity how often and easily the hidden and subdued springs of corruption burst out afresh, and threaten to overflow the higher and better being with filth and pollution!

The regulative powers, even of a well-constituted soul, lose sometimes their hold and control at a careless and unwatchful moment. How the appetites strive for the mastery, even over a pure conscience and a renewed will! What efforts on the part of the lower powers to win again from time to time the old ascendancy! How lusts and passions war against the soul, and how the

higher affections get overborne by lower impulses! And the new nature, however it may be keyed to holier issues, gets often out of tune, as if an evil spirit had struck the chords of our worse selves and played upon the baser notes. The old man with his deeds, which are corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, though subdued and thrust out-of-doors, returns ever and anon to claim possession, as long as 'evil is present with us.' 'Oh! wretched that I am!' cries the Apostle, even when far on in his sanctified course, 'who shall deliver me from this body of death?' the image he uses being one derived from a penalty imposed by the tyrant Mezentius, who bound a loathsome corpse to the living body, so that when the victim lay down at night the horrible thing was present with him, and when he woke in the morning the sickening corruption still was there! The hope toward Christ is to be freed for ever from this foul body of the carnal nature, from its very presence and memory, so that we may be pure in spirit even as He is pure.

(4) In *environing* purity. The surrounding relations, the all-encompassing atmosphere, will correspond to the purity of the inner being. There purity shall have its fixed seat

and abode. Nothing that defileth there in that new heaven and earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness; only sights and scenes of purity to fill and fascinate the eye; only purest harmony to regale the ear; all pure pursuits to engage the activities; all pure converse to rejoice the heart; the streets of the city of pure gold; and the river a pure river of the water of life.

Heaven itself is purity—a purity too great as yet to enter into us. Our hope is to be pure even as Christ is pure, so as at last to be fit to enter into it.

(β) *Christ's invisibleness tends to render this hope predominant.* It is what is not seen as yet that brings hope into play as an efficient and energetic force. And every man who cherishes the hope of being pure, as Christ is pure, will be purifying himself. For hope takes after the quality of its object. If faith be the most vitalizing principle in our nature, and love the most transforming, then hope is, of the three, the most assimilative in its action.

> The thing we hope for, that we are.
> . . . . .
> To let the new life in, we know
> Desire must ope the portal.[1]

[1] Lowell,

The reason is obvious. Hope being, as we have seen, a union of desire and expectation, so far as any one hopes to be pure as Christ is, so far he desires himself to be pure, and sees such purity to be a covetable thing. Yet desire by itself might be feeble and dormant, if not sustained by an assured expectation of the object being sooner or later attainable. Thus desire being a certain impelling power and expectation moving also in the same direction, hope becomes charged with a double potency. So we know the hopeful man to be ever the aspiring man, and if he be living under the uplifting power of a cherished ideal, he is himself being thereby uplifted day by day. For hope, though it fixes its gaze on the future, has its power in the present. Its object may be in the unseen and in the future, but its operation is ever in the actual present. Every man that hath this hope of being pure like Christ is by virtue thereof, and as a matter of fact and immediate attainment, even now purifying himself. The general and prevailing trend and tendency of his being is toward purifying himself. The bias of his character is in this direction. Not that he is unaidedly able to purify himself, but he is stirred and impelled to use the needful means and

measures as well as invoke any helpful aid that may contribute towards the purifying of himself physically, mentally, morally, and socially; for this hope has affinity for purity of every sort and in every direction. More especially it prompts towards—

(1) *Physical or bodily purity.* This Christian hope is naturally and of necessity the patron of all healthful cleanliness without and within. It recognizes that filth and dirt is matter out of place, and it appreciates the Divine provision of five times more water than land on the earth's surface, for the sanitation and cleansing of the globe.

But this hope deals with something deeper than superficial purifying. It demands the putting away of the filth of the flesh, and hating even the garment spotted from the world; avoiding self-indulgence and all excess, whether intemperance, gluttony, or other sins and wickedness done in the body to its hurt, its pollution, and inward foulness and corruption. And it is no mere negative prescription against bodily ills, but it calls into use all lawful positive measures for ensuring the sound body as the fit handmaid of the sound mind.

(2) *Mental purity.* 'The wisdom that

cometh from above is first pure,' and 'the knowledge of the holy is understanding.' 'The fear of the Lord is clean, enlightening the eyes.' With all intellectual attainments and equipment, the purifying hope interjects the craving for that knowledge which is 'a well-spring of life to him that hath it,' as it seeks to understand and find the knowledge of God. For 'verily our souls are purified in obeying the truth through the Spirit,' because 'every word of the Lord is pure,' and it has its own purifying influence. So Jesus says, 'Ye are clean through the word I have spoken unto you.'

(3) *Moral purity.* Purity of heart, speech, and behaviour is the air of this hope. It reaches to and cleanses the hidden springs and motives of life and character. It adds its 'Amen' to such words as these, 'Blessed are the pure in heart'; 'Who shall ascend to the hill of the Lord? he that hath clean hands and a pure heart'; 'follow after purity'; 'keep thyself pure'; 'purifying the heart by faith.' 'Finally, whatsoever things are pure . . . think of these things, and do them.' For 'to them that are unbelieving is nothing pure, but both their minds and conscience are defiled.' This, then, is a hope that has

taught its holders to be 'washing their robes, and making them white in the blood of the Lamb,' and to invoking the Spirit of purity and grace, saying, 'Tis Thine to cleanse the heart and purify the soul.'

(4) *Environing purity.* It has its eye upon and exerts its efforts towards securing pure conditions and surroundings. Foulness of every sort is its aversion, as purity in every form is its delight and aim; and whether it be purity in the home or in the street, be it domestic, social, economic, municipal, political, public, private, or any other purity outward or inward, this hope accords and is in fellowship with *that.*

(γ) *Christ's invisibleness renders this hope a patiently persistent force.* It is the very nature of hope to 'hope on, hope ever,' persisting in the pursuit of its ideal till its goal is reached. 'Every man that hath this hope in Him, purifieth himself, even as He is pure.' The aim is high, but not unattainable; for every man that hath this hope expects and desires to reach it in the end. Hope is faithful to its own ideal, and feels the spell and fascination of it. The object it has in view is a constant and abiding satisfaction. The only dissatisfying thing it feels is its own

poor attainment in the ideal it cherishes, and this but adds incentive to further effort. For 'hope springs perennial in the human breast,' and seeks to nourish itself by what it feeds upon. No patience equal to the patience of hope! No persistency equal to the persistence of hope!

Does any one shrink from the conflict, under the mistaken notion that we should never think to equal Christ? This were but a false humility. For our hope is not to rival Christ, but to resemble Him; to be pure even as He is pure. The 'as' here is not the 'as' of equality, but of similarity. A single white ray is as pure as all the sun's rays together, though not equal to them in quantity or vastness of influence. The likeness may be perfect, though it may be in miniature. Every rill is of as sparkling purity as the well from which it flows, unless it contract to itself contaminating elements. In Christ is no impurity. No contamination emanates from Him. He *is* pure; the patron and the pattern of all purity; the very spring and fontal source of it. Himself its model, He is not less its strongest motive. The whiter a surface, the more noticeable and obnoxious is any spot or stain. It is against the white

radiance of Christ's purity our own defilements are best discerned and most truly loathed. His purity is no mere negation, it is a positive force; no mere absence of defilement, it is a purifying power, like the Holy Grail. Was it not the soiled and spotted Sir Lancelot who was repelled by the verdict, 'This quest is not for thee'? Only the pure-hearted knight, 'whose strength was as the strength of ten, because his heart was pure,' who cherished the vision of the pure, could say:

> I, Galahad, I saw the Grail,
> The Holy Grail, descend:
> Nor failing ever from my sight,
> But moving with me day and night.

Thus all who entertain this hope, 'enduring as seeing Him Who is invisible,' get changed into the same image from glory to glory, till at last the purity long forming, through bud and blossom, bursts forth under the beatific vision into the consummate flower of perfect likeness; and our hope attains its full fruition when we become pure at length, 'even as He is pure.'

CHAPTER III

THE GAIN TO LOVE

Love for Jesus is most noble, and spurs us on to great things.—*The Imitation of Christ*, v.

I love Thee now, my Lord; but all the love is Thine.
And by Thy love I live; for now Thy love is mine.

MADAME GUYON.

Jesus Christ, Whom having not seen, ye love.—1 *Peter* i. 8.

CHAPTER III

THE GAIN TO LOVE

Invisible realities, as we have already seen, are claimed by religion as its peculiar province. They constitute its special forte and scope. Among invisible things it holds its lofty seat. There it finds its unalloyed delights, and there it 'lives, and moves, and has its being.'

(i) There need be, therefore, no surprise if love to an *unseen* Saviour is demanded as the indispensable test and badge of Christian discipleship. For such a claim is in beautiful accord with the simplest ideas of anything worthy of the name of religion, and coalesces in choicest harmony with its essential design, of securing the triumph in our hearts of the invisible over the visible constitution of things.

But, as it is the nature of love to crave the actual presence and the closest conceivable intimacy of its object, some may be hampered

with the feeling that the bodily absence of the Saviour stands somehow opposed to a strictly personal attachment, or seriously interferes with our love being vitally direct in its operation.

Many also, suspecting the weakness or coldness of their love to Christ, may secretly endeavour to condone the offence by imposing on themselves with the delusive plea that lack of ocular privilege sufficiently accounts for their 'lack of service'; and under such a groundless impression, they are perhaps inclined to cry in the words, if not in the spirit, of the eager Greeks, 'Sirs, we would *see* Jesus.'

Moreover, there are certain stages of Christian experience, certain moods of ruminating, speculative faith, and certain tendencies of individual temperament, which prompt the occasional desire either that Jesus had not left His Church below, or had bequeathed to it some visible token of His presence, as God was made manifest to Israel of old by the lustrous Shekinah, that floated over the mercy-seat between the cherubim in the wilderness tabernacle. We perhaps have all such moods as make us apt to wonder why Jesus did not prolong His stay in the bosom

of His Church, and we inquire with a measure of impatience why His visible presence has not been perpetuated on earth, or why He does not periodically disturb the awful stillness of His unseen working?

Many, perhaps, permit themselves to be touched with such millenarian outlooking for His appearance as savours more of the old than of the new dispensation; and many, too, may grudge the first disciples their singular honour of a visibly familiar intercourse. But though we may not disparage that remarkable privilege, we may well question if it really were a superlative advantage for our love, any more than for our faith. Perhaps some fondly fancy that if they had walked by the side of Jesus, conversed with Him, sat like Mary at His feet, drinking in His words of wisdom as they dropped like the rain, and distilled from His lips like refreshing dew, met the gracious glances of His love-speaking eyes, or gazed with rapt vision on His 'human face Divine'—that *then and therefore* the sluices of their inner being would burst open, and they would have poured out a full tide of sacred libation at the Saviour's feet; that *then and therefore* their minds would have risen to rapture, and their feeblest throb would

have been enthusiasm. Vain notion! and how altogether contrary to actual facts!

But even if it were true, what an egregious mistake, to suppose that flutter and excitement, or the ebullitions of even friendly feeling and interest, are themselves real love to Christ! Evidently not without a purposed bearing on such a fancy does the Apostle Peter introduce the words of this text as a suggestive protest: 'Jesus Christ, Whom having not seen, ye love.'

For while he is running a contrast between the present condition of Christian life and that prospective one in which love to Christ shall duly attain its coveted ecstasy of vision, he brings forward in so prominent a light this temporary invisibleness of the Saviour, as if to intimate it must play some part, more or less important, in the economy of our love to the Redeemer.

The expression 'having not seen,' though introduced parenthetically, is singularly arresting—an evident reminiscence or echo of the Lord's own words, 'It is expedient for you that I go away'; only that whereas the principle was enunciated by our Lord in general terms, it is now applied in one particular direction. With consummate fitness it is

brought to bear specifically on that grace of love by which Peter had himself been tested at the lake-side of Galilee, in that home-thrust of a question, 'Simon, son of Jonas, *lovest* thou Me?' For while the Apostles may not quote the very words of the Master in their Epistles, they must, of course, often reflect their meaning, and often reduplicate upon them. And so, if Christ's corporeal absence were expedient as a wholesome discipline for all the graces, love will share in the benefit. What touching and satisfactory evidence is afforded by the present words that the Apostle Peter, now that he knew his Saviour better, was cordially reconciled to that once bewildering announcement respecting the Lord's needful disappearance!

Some may doubt the possibility of loving One we have never seen, and may regard all such love as almost visionary. But that this is an entire mistake is readily evinced. For as a matter of fact all are aware of loving or having had love drawn out to other than objects of sight. The blind have no difficulty in loving those they have never seen, and loving as truly and affectionately as those who have sight. As a matter of fact, it is not sense, but mental conception,

that kindles the inner affection of love. Lower sense may aid affection, by facilitating and vivifying mental conception. It is in this way that memorials, gifts, and other suggestive associations may aid in kindling or in sustaining love, or rendering its exercise more easy.

It is needful here to realize what love, in its truest and highest sense, properly is; whether in its nature, its expression, or its aim. As to its nature or essence, love is 'the bond of perfectness'—the shorthand name for all possible, all credible, all conceivable excellencies. Love is the golden circlet in which are set all moral perfections, like costly gems—the firmament that seems to hold within itself the jewelled starry host. No excellency is wanting from it, in its highest and divinest form.

Justice, indeed, is not love; but that cannot be full or complete love which is capable of an unjust thought, or word, or act. Faithfulness is not love; but how poor and incomplete the love that is without fidelity? Wisdom is not love; but what kind of love were that from which wisdom is excluded?

And so with every other excellence. Love is 'the bond of perfectness'—anything short

of this is some corruption, as selfishness is of true self-love; or lust is of sensuous or sexual love.

And as love is an expression of relationship, it will of course manifest itself variously, according to the relations in which it stands. A father loves his son, and so his paternal love looks down with paternal fondness, care, and counsel. The love in a child looks up with reverence, confidingness, and obedience. The love is the same; its expression differs. But, as love is always and everywhere the outgoing movement of the nature, it will invariably show itself as the disposition to give or impart itself, so as to bless and benefit. Thus 'God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son [at what cost and sacrifice to Himself, who can tell?], that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' So 'Christ gave Himself for us,' holding nothing back that either He could give or that we could receive.

As to love's aim, what can that aim be but to draw everything into affinity and fellowship with itself? All perfect love is love for love's sake; love in the interests of love; love that rejoices and rests in loving.

What is the end and aim of all highest love but simply to produce and maintain like-minded love; to beget and breed a love akin to itself—not simply a love that goes out in pity, commiseration, mercy, or compassion, but a love that strives to awaken a love that will richly afford complacency, approval, delight, and ineffable satisfaction; a love that finds itself reflected in all that constitutes true and perfect bliss and blessedness?

And it may help both to quicken our own love to the Lord, and help us to understand what love to Christ really is, as well as conciliate our minds to this dispensation, if in prosecution of our subject in general we now endeavour to reckon up some possible or designed influences, or count the gain of Christ's unseenness, so far as our personal love to Him is concerned in particular. For as the painter knows how to produce by a simple touch strangely heightened effects, without altering the previous substratum of colour, may not the invisibleness of Christ be both fitted and intended, like such a simple, artistic device, to fix in the foreground the most desirable features of love to the Redeemer? May it not aid in making it *purer*, *truer*, and *worthier*, giving to it a

chastened and mellowed tone of inexpressible depth and delicacy, casting over it an indescribable hue, and an otherwise unattainable bloom, helping thus to make it evangelical in its origin, adoring in its spirit, and paramount and practical in its sway?

(ii) The invisibleness of Christ has a manifest tendency and adaptation to secure the *most correct formation* of our love to Him. It facilitates the birth and development of our love as an *evangelical* principle of attachment. There is a vast difference between the love due to Christ and that which is demanded from us by any one else. The love which Christ requires is something quite *unique*, and is attainable only by regarding Him *uniquely*. That form of religionism which finds its consummation in dilating on the candour, faithfulness, and benevolence of Jesus, and then stops short, is not only a very narrow, but a cracked and blemished mould from which to take a cast of love to Christ, while the love itself will be correspondingly scarred with unseemly flaws. No such love which expatiates predominantly on those qualities common to our Lord with perfected saints can be distinctively love to Christ. Perhaps it is not needless to insist on the truism that it is Jesus

the Christ Whom we are to love. It is as the Saviour we are to love Him. And hence the Apostle insists in the present passage on our love being exerted towards Christ considered as the foundation laid for the '*salvation* of our souls.' Christ known and believed in as the alone Saviour—this is the main factor that awakens real and acceptable love to Him, the evangelical love that alone will be truly agreeable and acceptable to Him.

We hear much, in these days, of the person of Christ being the essence of the Gospel, and the need of reconstructing the Gospel around that person. If by these and similar representations it be meant that our love must embrace Him as the one alone and living Saviour, that our affections are not to be roused by a system of thought which deals with Christ as an ancient and remote personage, while His actual vitalizing presence is ignored, we have reason to rejoice, so long as the result aimed at and achieved is to intensify the glow of our love by lodging in the Christian mind a more vivid conception of *His living* presence and grace. Not what was He, but what is He ?—what am I to Him, and what is He to me ? That is the constant urgent, and practical question with which I

have to deal, while not omitting nor forgetting more preliminary questions of serious moment. This will prevent our making of Him a mere hazy personage in the musty annals of the past.

But if their secret purport be to create an intelligent dislike to saving truth by vague and sentimental vapourings about the person of Christ, and to get quit of imagined perplexity and stiffness of doctrine, it behoves us to remember that the name of Jesus Christ is the Saviour's *official* name, and that personal relation to Christ is not any romantic attachment, but such as grasps Him in this specific aspect.

Worthy and acceptable love to Christ must be love to Him for what He distinctively and exclusively is, for what He alone is to us, the one Deliverer and Saviour from our sins. It is Christ alone that saves. Not Christ and the Church, not Christ and the Bible, not Christ and the Sacraments. The Church, the Bible, and the Sacraments are all of vital value and importance in their own place. But their proper place is ever subordinate to Christ Himself, and never to be put on the same level with Him. They are helps—necessary helps—towards our finding and reaching Him.

But they must not come into competition with Him, still less be used to supplant or obscure men's views of Him.

True, we are not to omit in our love a regard to His personality, for the text emphatically says, '*Whom* ye love'; but we love not His person, if we love Him not in His saving offices; for it is not less emphatically testified that it is *Jesus Christ* Whom we are to love. Take an analogous case. If we love a patriot with a love he would esteem and approve, we must love him *as a patriot*. Our love must be evoked by his patriotism. Many might have their admiration for him drawn out by his stalwart bearing, his generous and manly expression, his dignified mien, or some other lovable qualities or attributes, apart from his patriotism altogether; but he would be the first to reject the incommensurate homage. And so the unique aspect in which Christ is presented to the embrace of saving faith is the very aspect in which He both decisively wins and imperatively demands our love. These two, faith and love, being coincident in their basis, if our love is to be evangelical it must first be evangelized; for if we are to love *Christ*, we must learn to look on Him with other eyes than those of sense. Our

love must not be carnal, but spiritual in its principle—not a mere natural affection, nor the mere instinct of a common earthly relationship. Doubtless our Lord was loved as the endeared member of a domestic circle, beloved as a neighbour, and sought after as a benevolently befriending presence—and all this was befitting, right, and natural, but none the less insufficient in its grounds and shallow in its motives, though worthy enough in its place.

Many saw Christ who did not know Him, and had no desire to know Him; many knew Him who in no respect whatever loved Him; and many loved Him after a sort, but from the meanest considerations, or on the basis of the merest adventitious circumstances which usually evoke the likings and attachments of human friendships and acquaintanceships, whereas evangelical love to the Redeemer must be based on a saving relationship, and be correlative with the union implied in a spiritual fellowship. That personal relationship to the Saviour which alone accounts for evangelical love can evidently never be created nor constituted by physical contiguity or bodily nearness in space. His incognito can never be penetrated by the eye of flesh, nor His

functions as Saviour be recognized through the avenues of the senses.

The historical fact of the redemption, translated by the power of faith into an individual experience, is the primary root of love in our hearts to Christ, so that the corporeal visibleness of the Saviour is not any chief source from which such love would draw its nourishment, as it is not the influence from which it can be generated. The Apostles therefore set no store by any physical presence of the Master in this connection—more valuable springs of evangelic personal attachment to the Redeemer welling up forcibly otherwise and from other considerations altogether. The love due to our Lord hinges not on any bodily vision, external intercourse, or corporeal impression.

Does not this help to explain why the inspired writers have not described the bodily appearance of our Saviour ; and have not only not favoured us with any photographic delineation or detailed portraiture, but have entirely avoided any passing hints or reminiscences of that kind ? While most gifted poets have stretched their imaginations to catch a conception, however faint, of that face which, though more marred than that of any man,

was the face of One who was in the highest sense 'fairer than the children of men,' though the most variously endowed painters have struggled to embody on canvas their own ideal, and though there be scattered abroad some feigned likeness, with kindred spurious relics, there is a profound and significant silence on the part of the Evangelists. Such delineations would only have gratified a prurient curiosity, and, it may be, have encouraged a set of poor pitiable superstitious affections, as the bones of Moses would have done, if they had fallen into the hands of the Israelites, without tending to enhance in any measure that sort of love which is the alone befitting exponent of obligations and claims arising out of the one special unique and saving relationship. Such a union with the Redeemer is presupposed in true love, and it is very observable in that section of our Lord's farewell discourse in the fifteenth chapter of John, where Jesus Himself is engaged in expounding this connection of thought.

The idea of union is indeed the grand underlying idea of that whole discourse; but whereas in the beginning of it Christ dwells on the most mysterious of all unions or relations—that subsisting between the Father

and Son, with the Spirit's relation to both—and at close of it, or rather of the concluding prayer, dwells on the spiritual union or relationship of His people with one another, He occupies the central portion of the discourse with another aspect of union—that which subsists between Himself and His disciples; and as the hour approached when He must begin to be corporeally separated from His disciples, the more vividly would He impress on their minds the need and reality of such a mutual relationship as could not be violated by His disappearance, and as could alone generate true love for Him. Love is the outgrowth of vital union to Him as the source and channel of spiritual life. So He has commanded and will ever command the love of millions who have never seen Him. For it is love that begets love, and this is independent of mere sight. It is not the sight of the gracious smile on His face, not the outward grace of His form, not the winsomeness of His manner—not any or all of these and such-like provocatives of ordinary affection, that can sway and move the hearts of untold myriads in one mighty impulse of love for Him.

It is this knowledge of His vast and un

matched suffering, dying, saving, love for us as sinners that woos and wins our love for Him. Anything more than this, anything short of it, may be fondness, may be a kind of 'painted regard,' but can at best be a shadowy and indistinct, if not even fictitious homage. Our love to Christ must be higher than the simple-hearted, well-meant, clinging devotement of this same Apostle, which dictated in the interests of sense a dissuasive against our Lord's intimated death, thereby manifesting that the instinct of a merely natural or unevangelized affection is up in arms against the great act of Christ's redeeming plan.

The invisibleness of the Saviour is an 'aid to faith,' and therefore to love. Earthly yearnings seem quite incompatible with any profound appreciation of His saving work. They tend to take off the mind from that inner essential part, and in so far as they are cherished there seems a diminution of our capability to attend to those saving truths on which, as on a pedestal, He Himself is ever held up to our view. Even if He were visible to the eye of sense, faith in saving truth as it is in Jesus, and faith only, could present *His own self* to the arms of our love. Only

truth or doctrine is the atmosphere, the needful, the indispensable medium of vision, and apart from it Christ cannot fulfil His promise, 'I will manifest *Myself* unto you.' His very bodily absence is fitted to keep men's hearts and consciences more in contact with Him simply as the Saviour, and more in the direct line of complacency in Him, gratitude towards Him, and sympathetic congeniality with Him, in His *redeeming* plans and pursuits, which is the groundwork and kernel of the love He demands.[1]

(iii) The invisibleness of our Saviour has a manifest tendency and adaptation to secure the *fittest tone and attitude* in our evangelical love to Christ. That tone must be profoundly

[1] All this seems to have been instinctively grasped and realized by the great Napoleon; and though we may not guarantee the literal accuracy of much that he is alleged to have spoken, it is enough for our present purpose that he could have with perfect truth uttered all that is here put into his lips, whether he did use such words or not. In conversing one day at St. Helena with Count de Montholon, he is reported to have said: 'Alexander, Cæsar, Charlemagne, and I myself have founded great empires, but upon what did these erections of our genius depend? Upon force! Jesus alone founded His empire upon *love*, and to this very day millions would die for Him. . . . I think I understand something of human nature, and I tell you, all these were men, and I am a man; none else is like Him; Jesus Christ was more than a man. . . . I have inspired multitudes with such an enthusiastic devotion that they would have died for me; but to do this it was necessary that I should be *visibly present*, with the electric influence of my looks, of my words, of my voice. When I saw men and they saw me and

religious, and the attitude must be that of adoring homage. For love to the Lord Jesus Christ is a distinctively *religious* principle—the central habit of Christian piety. It must learn to utter itself in the language of doxology: 'Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; unto Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.' Love to Christ must be comprehensive in its sweep, if it would be correct in its scope. It is the Lord in His fulness—it is the whole Jesus Christ round Whom our religious affections must cluster — and His person, though one, is complex. His being embraces two full and complete natures—Divine and human.

I was speaking to them in their sight, I could light up the flame of self-devotion to me in their hearts. . . . Christ alone has succeeded in so raising the mind of man toward the unseen that it becomes insensible to the barriers of time and space. Across a chasm of eighteen hundred years Jesus Christ makes a demand which is above all others difficult to satisfy; He asks for that which a philosopher may often seek in vain at the hands of his friends, or a father of his children, or a bride of her spouse, or a man of his brother. He asks it unconditionally; and forthwith His demand is granted. Wonderful! In defiance of time and space, the soul of man, with all its powers and faculties, becomes an annexation to the empire of Christ. All who sincerely believe in Him experience that remarkable *supernatural* love for Him. . . . Time, the great destroyer, is powerless to extinguish this sacred flame; time can neither exhaust its strength nor put a limit to its range. This is what proves to me quite convincingly the Divinity of Jesus Christ.'

And our love is not love to Him in Himself, if we ignore either; while to show that our love must be prevailingly high-pitched and religiously reverential, we may bear in mind that the early disciples witnessed only a transient phase of His human exterior—human nature humbled and suffering, and not, as now, in that glorified state which He has assumed as the fixed, eternal form more fully consonant with His Divinity. We must have regard to Him as the *Lord* Jesus Christ. How paradoxical, yet true, that the very invisibleness of Christ helps to disclose Him to our view! How strangely cramping the effect of His lowly appearance on the attachment of the disciples! Hence the blame attachable to that Church which would draw *disproportioned* attention to the idea of the Lord having been a tender infant in His mother's arms, so as to divert the adoring love away from Him to her, who, by the steady and uniform suggestion of such a relationship, is exhibited with a superior authority and influence; whereas Jesus was a child in His mother's arms but a very few months. That was only a passing phase of His being and experience; needful to know; useful thankfully to recall, but not to be obtrusively

presented, as though it were some permanent or abiding result.

Such a mode of stereotyping the infancy of the Saviour is not merely a most vulgar impropriety, but it sadly interferes with a rightly grounded adoring love.[1] If it be meant to stimulate the lofty homage of reverently loving hearts, it is a bold attempt to undo the very benefit that is couched in Christ's invisibleness. And if it be pleaded that it presents the right object of worship to the Christian eye, the counterplea is at once suggested that even the worship of the right object may be most illegitimately practised. Who knows not that the true object may be worshipped in the worst spirit, if not of idolatry, at least of superstition? Does not the obtrusion of Christ's infant form present through the eye a temptation to offer the Redeemer a different kind of loving homage from real *Divine* worship? There are not two kinds of Divine reverence—and the love which religiously worships and adores the exalted

[1] Those who know the infinite tenderness and gentleness of the Lord Jesus Himself can never feel the need of any mother intercessor or feminine helper, however 'full of grace' she may be. And as for the need and propriety of reverencing with worship and obeisance the Lord's mother, the devout soul that reverences and obeys a human priest might as suitably plead the need for reverencing and obeying the beloved priest's mother too.

Lord stands on a totally different footing from that of *hero-worship*. Let us ever deprecate any approach to what might confound the one with the other. Hero-worship is *admiration*, indeed; but Divine worship is *adoration*. No doubt, whatever sentiments of admiration we may gather around beloved or revered names must cluster no less around the Saviour of men—but these are utterly inadequate in this case. The love He demands is adoring love—a love that proffers a truly religious worship and homage.

How disadvantageously circumstanced were the early disciples, by reason of their close contact with the Lord's humble condition and bodily presence, for directing their love, however real, into a profoundly religious channel! So Jesus said to Mary at the sepulchre, 'Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended.' He tenderly yet firmly rejects and forbids the well-meant, but wholly incommensurate homage. His human form was yet in its temporary and transition stage—not yet received up into glory, nor fashioned yet as a body of abiding and completed perfectness in a final and heavenly state.

What a conjunction of contrary influences! either (*a*) introducing some confusing inter-

ference with their adoring attachment; or (*b*) enhancing the difficulty of that unqualified and unresisting subjection to Christ's Divine authority which is essential in our love to Him.

(*a*) In the former case, the danger to the first disciples lay in their love to the adorable Redeemer leading to a mere localizing of His Deity—as though God was transmuted into man, or man transformed into God. For the love which the disciples had to their Lord was a love which naturally contemplated Him in a chief degree on the side of His human nature—and even though they apprehended at last the indwelling Deity, the balance of impression lay rather on that side with which they were most familiarized, which veiled rather than revealed its glory. And if their love in its comparatively untutored pupilage grasped more the human element, or fed itself on the visible and tangible nature, would it be sufficiently religious in its movement, or sufficiently accurate in its ground? We seem to see this false and misleading tendency in a most painfully exaggerated form in the case of those who demand a corporeal presence in the sacramental elements—a craving which,

singularly enough, develops itself in *worshipping* the supposed *materialized* presence in the hands of a priest, rather than the Divine and spiritual person Himself, as presented to the eye of faith. The mind, in such religious service, often gets no farther than the sensuous object before it, and finds a real difficulty in worship, unless when that object is afresh presented, in that particular materialized form. Genuine worship, on the other hand, is not dependent on place, tangible object, or time—it is spiritual and cosmopolitan. The unseenness of Christ seems, therefore, to afford scope for the movement of an adoring religious love in entire harmony with all spiritual worship. By His removal we have the benefit of a Christianized imagination, and are better able to understand and profit by His being everywhere a presence with us; an unlocalized, all-engrossing object of reverential love.

Any carnal introduction of the Saviour necessitates a kind of ritualism that is of the earth, earthy, belonging to the outer court of the temple—and it is the dogma of a *corporeal* presence that flits here and there in the sacramental elements which is the foundation for such a mechanical and ritual-

istic, as distinct from a reasonable or intellectual, order of service. Thereby the assembly of Christian disciples is transformed into a 'worldly sanctuary,' and homage to the Lord is rendered in the fashion of what one has called 'Lama' worship—a form of adoring a human personage that obtains among degraded Asiatic tribes. These two things go together—a *materialized* presence of the Lord and that whole series of religious services consisting of mystic movements, genuflections, manipulations, gorgeous apparel, mumblings and mutterings, incense, candles, and other mechanical observances and accessories, fit, perhaps, for a court display, or the presence of a visible king, but utterly incongruous before the unseen Lord. And so Christ's invisibleness is a standing protest against that ritualistic devotion which, to us, constituted as we here are on earth, must savour of the spirit of idolatry—that spirit which moves and lives in scenic and theatric show. His invisibleness has its own salutary influence in disciplining us in the high art of loving Christ as Christ, in the full effulgence of His own proper and glorified person, not as He was only, but as He now is and is to be.

(*b*) Again, by His outward appearance the early disciples' danger lay in their love being a sentimental feeling of attachment rather than what it should have been, a principled and paramount affection in their souls. How disadvantageously these first disciples were circumstanced from this point of view! Perpetually familiar with His suffering condition and lowly form, even when they recognized the superhuman glory they were tempted to use the freedoms and familiarities of an apparently proximate equality. True, it was their distinguished duty and privilege to love Him as their best and dearest earthly friend; and it is no less our prerogative to glory in His incarnate form and human nature, to love Him as One Who is 'not ashamed to call us brethren'; but not as if this mutual human friendship must exercise itself on the same plane in His case and ours. The love of a parent to the child will wear an appearance widely different from that of the child to the parents, though the affection or principle be in both cases the same: the one *looks down* with tender interest, and watchful care; the other *looks up* with reverential, trustful, and submissive regard. And it is not difficult to conceive that the latter ex-

pression of love must be the mould after which our attachment to the exalted Redeemer is to be fashioned and consolidated. Our emotion must be congruous with the whole view of Christ's person, and the glory of both His primary state and His acquired mediatorial position. And it would appear as if our Lord had to adopt expedients to enable the disciples to overcome the temptations incident to their human fellowship with Him, to broaden their contracted apprehension, to check their undue familiarity, and to raise their apprehensions to a higher level. It has been ingeniously suggested that this may have been a leading purpose of His transfiguration, and of that peculiar mode of dealing with the disciples in the interval between the resurrection and ascension.

Without destroying that aspect of love which had regard to Him as a man, a friend, and a brother, and was bound up in a human earthly intimacy, upon this He had to superinduce love of a purely religious order, which should be the paramount affection and imperial impulse of the soul. Our Lord after His resurrection appeared only at intervals, and these appearances were very wonderful and mysterious. And how successfully did all His

studied inaccessibility, His mysterious reserve, His unwonted loftiness of bearing throughout the last forty days of earthly sojourn, train their minds at once to elevated views and transcendently devout expressions of love, may be gathered from the exclamation in which the ardent affection of Thomas finds vent for his holier and deeper tone, 'My Lord and my God!'

All experience confirms the impression that if we abstract from the Divine plenitude of the Saviour, we diminish the power of love to Christ as a spiritual influence. And in proportion to His felt elevation above us will be the depth of our love to Him in our hearts. If we hold any object over the glassy surface of water, the nearer to the surface it is held the shallower will be the reflection; and in proportion to our raising it up toward heaven will its image be cast down into the calm depths below. To the highest conceivable pitch of glory and power does Scripture labour to elevate the Saviour in our view, that we may give back an answer out of the deep places of our hearts. His seat must be in the centre of our being; our love to Him must be a dominant religious principle which views Him as without a rival, which not only

does not interfere with love to the Divine Father, but is the very expression of that love which must be supreme, just as tokens of love either to a father or a mother in their respective places alike honour in both cases that duty of reverence which the parental tie demands. What an impetus in the direction of 'honouring the Son even as we honour the Father' has been given to our religious love by the invisibleness of the Lord! How it facilitates the Spirit and strengthens the ground of dutiful submission to Him! The French veteran, lying mortally wounded on the battlefield, cried to the surgeon as he was probing for the fatal bullet in the region of the heart, 'A little deeper, and you will find the emperor.' So, deeper than love of home, deeper than love of country, deeper than love of kindred, deeper than love of life, must be our love to our Saviour—not a mere fanciful, evanescent emotion, but a calm, undecaying, and all-pervasive principle. The love for Jesus consecrates, exalts, and brings into a glowing focus all other affections. It is the central power, the controlling principle, the regulating force, and proportioning spirit of them all operating perpetually, unreservedly, supremely.

(iv) Christ's invisibleness has a manifest tendency to *secure a love for Him that will prove not only paramount in its sway, but of highest practical efficiency.* There is an element in Nature which, according to a modern authority, is the universal agent of colour and beauty over its fair face; and, singularly enough, the same metal — iron — subdues the earth to our service, and paints it for our delectation. But for the presence of this oxide of iron, the soil would all wear a dull dingy hue, unrelieved by the rich warm tints we see in the darkling furrow or the golden sands.

But for this single element, curiously proportioned and applied, we should alike be robbed of the glowing purple of the hills and the exquisite hues of varied tint in our jaspers, pebbles, and other precious stones. And what is more to our purpose, the crimson of the blood, the noblest colour of Nature, is mysteriously connected with the same wondrous element — a crimson which is linked with the vitality of our being, while the vitality itself is so linked with this same iron mingling in our veins that without its help neither the ruddy glow of health nor the blush of sensitive modesty would mantle on

the face. And so by this evangelical religious principle of love to Christ not only is our life subdued to His service, but its earthly aspect is to be glorified by the co-mingling hues of heaven. This adoring and religiously evangelic love is the vital fluid of Christian life that suffuses the spiritual man with the radiance of heaven's own health and beauty. And how can it fill such a place, and discharge such a function, unless it acknowledge Christ's sovereign right and bow before His incomparably exalted claims, whether He require dutiful obedience to His will in commanding or meek submission to the same will in inflicting and chastising? This homage we must learn to pay to Him without the indignity of questioning *to His face* His requirements, or arguing with Him on the propriety of His appointments, as those in His own immediate and bodily presence were tempted not infrequently to do.

Now, Christ's invisibleness has a manifest tendency to afford facilities for our love to Him attaining *the richest possible* culture and achieving the highest practical results, thereby becoming more *worthy* of Him Who is its glorious object. That love to the Saviour must be of the greatest service for God and

man, from whatever side we view it, is evident enough just because it is an evangelical and religious principle of attachment—just because the Lord Jesus Himself is its real object. He reflects His own worth upon it, and inoculates it with His own glory and power. It borrows His lustre, and therefore shines with unmatched splendour. But while it thus acquires much from the very fact of the Saviour being its object, it admits of gradations of value, viewed as a practicable tribute of homage to His name. It is susceptible of culture by the ordinary process of submission to testing and discipline. And what if Christ's very invisibleness be one of the simplest and fittest methods of trial and training? This idea of enhanced value acquired through the application of the finest ordeals is a fundamental one in the present passage. The Apostle speaks of our being placed in the midst of varied forms of trial, in order that our faith and love may approve themselves genuine, and may result in praise, honour, and glory at the open appearing of Jesus Christ. This is the broad principle on which the whole passage is based, indicating the need of our love undergoing this testing operation, and suggesting His temporary

though complete invisibleness as the readiest and most suitable expedient. Our love to the Redeemer becomes, in comparison with love to any other object, like *golden ore*; but if it is to be *refined* gold, it must be subjected to a fiery action; if it is to be *wrought* gold, it must first be *beaten*. And what fire and hammering are to gold is the temporary invisibleness of the Saviour to our love, being both a *fit training* and a *fit test*.

(*a*) A fit training. And how is it so? How does the invisibleness of the Lord tend to discipline and develop our love? Is it not rather a privation—a real loss? Yes; but many a privation is the most direct way to a gain, and every loss is not permanent detriment. Temporary and judicious deprivation of the blessing of sleep may, for example, be a means of achieving a vaster scholarship or a wider and more remunerative business. No doubt it may be easier for us to *fasten* our love on one whom we have seen or may see at pleasure. We are more readily affected by objects which are visible and tangible. So much indeed is this the case that we find the truth embodied in the common proverb, 'Out of sight, out of mind.' But for any one to be in sight by no means implies a willingness

to have him in mind; and the appearance before us of any unloved one simply evokes a more forcible antipathy. Moreover, it is not sight, but conviction and reflection, that can give *depth and permanence* of impression; for love dependent in any degree on visual perception is both very common and very commonplace. We need only here advert again to the fact that love never displayed the stamina of a richly constituted spiritual power in the disciples till after the Lord's removal. It seemed a poor, dwarfed, stunted, if not a capricious and bewildered attachment. And, as a matter of fact, it was only after the Lord's departure that love began to conquer the world for Christ; His invisibleness seems a fitting and natural instrument for quickening love into a dauntless heroism, a self-sacrificing devotion, an irresistible energy. Self was forgotten and absorbed in the transcendent claims and glory of Him Whom they supremely loved, and Whose ascension was the fit crown of His supreme majesty and paramount lordship. Previously love was too much that of a quiescent and easy enjoyment —a complacent, comfortable contemplation. Privation aroused it. Christ's external removal opened a doorway for the effusion of

spiritual increase, and its natural and fitting concomitant was an augmented largeness of grace; His departure was the fit signal for the richest dowry of the Spirit. What, then, is the right place of vision in the present economy of education? As we have already shown, we do not need it for generating love to Christ, for we do love those whom we have never seen—those 'dead but sceptred sovereigns that still rule our spirits from their urns.' Nor do we need it in order to demonstrate and make manifest our love for Him. Where, then, does this privilege of seeing the Lord most profitably come in? Surely as a reward to love. For what higher attainment can there be than to see Him *as He really is*? Is not this one of the most exquisite ideas of heaven?

> Christ to love, as One we know,
> Constitutes the joy below;
> Christ to see, as One we love,
> Constitutes the bliss above.

This is '*the prize* of our high calling.' But would it be a prize, would it be unspeakable joy, unless to hearts already loving Him? Could we say of a vision of Christ, 'Thy joys are too great to enter into me,' unless our hearts could cry, 'Oh, make me fit to enter

into them'? How suitable the vision of 'Christ as He is' to be a reward for love, whose very essence is to crave the presence and intimacy of its object! Self is forgotten in the presence of Him we love. This is the glory of the beatific vision in heaven, 'where love is an unerring light, and joy its own security.' And we can easily realize what a prodigiously effective influence was exercised upon love by such a hope and expectation. How it prevents love from settling into slothful contemplation, and makes it an active and industrious energy! The very fact of a beloved object being out of sight awakens a restless movement in its own direction, develops an affinity with its object in the loving mind, and evokes warmest interest and enterprise in all that makes for that object's honour and glory and satisfaction.

(*b*) This invisibleness is admirably fitted therefore to be a delicate and effective *test* of our love to Christ. Tried love is true love—and what more simple form of trial than the absence of its object? For if our love of truth, for example, is to be appraised and proved, truth must not be presented with an all-evident conspicuousness which could not possibly be missed; and if love to Christ is to be tested,

He should not be forced in person on the view. The appearance of Christ would signalize the conclusion of the testing process. And as, on the one hand, the Lord needs not to be bodily present in winning the love of our hearts, so neither need He, on the other hand, withdraw the veil which hides Him from our sight in order to afford us an opportunity of *proving* our personal love to Him. For though He is no longer a poor, pain-stricken, hungry, and thirsty tenant of earth, no longer an object of pity or alms-giving, no longer a pilgrim or stranger on life's dusty highway, dependent on the quiet attention or friendly offices of such as the Bethany family, who frequently ministered in their grateful, unassuming way to His necessities—are we therefore precluded from evincing as directly and forcibly that we do love Him? We may well be content with our Lord's own decision, 'He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me.' When the woman with the alabaster box of precious ointment poured its rich contents on Him as He sat at meat, His person was honoured both *formally* and *really*—but, alas! these two things are separable. He may be formally, very formally, the object of loving attention without being really so—as

when He was received and entertained at meat in the Pharisee's house; and, on the other hand, He Himself may be really loved, though His person formally may not be reached. If it had happened that our Lord had thought fit to stay the woman's hand from anointing His own head, and had given some other command for the disposal of the cruet's contents, would not her love have been as really love to Him, if in submissive obedience to His wish she had checked her own impulse, and been guided by His desire—though she had not been permitted to anoint His sacred body as for the burial?

Though therefore we may not, like Zacchæus, run before Him and receive Him in His exhaustion with joy to our dwelling, are we not virtually debarring Him an entrance to our home if we open not the doorway of our hearts, that the King of Glory may come in—if we welcome not His whole cause and interests into the warmest corner of our affections? We may not bathe His toil-worn feet with soothing and refreshing tears, but we are none the less able to prove our love for Him, in His own estimation, when 'we do whatsoever He commands us.' We may not, like the woman of Sychar, hear Him say,

'Give Me to drink,' and let down our pitcher into the deep well of Jacob, and draw of the cooling water wherewith He may moisten His parched throat, but our evangelical, religious, worshipping, and cultured love will find its object in Himself of a truth, whensoever and in as far soever as His cross is our glory, His service our delight, His salvation our joy, His will our rule, His example our pattern, His presence (felt, though unseen) our confidence, His grace our strength, His promise our solace, His word our nutriment, His cause our watchword, His approval our ambition, His honour our goal, His loved ones our loved ones, His friends our friends, His interests our interests, His cause our cause, and His will our will. How searching the test! What a safeguard against self-deceiving formality! It necessitates love avouching its genuineness as a vital operative principle—a love which 'many waters cannot quench nor floods drown,' ever scooping out new channels in which it may freshly flow, living its daily life and going its daily rounds; in short, doing all things 'in the name of the Lord Jesus'—here bearing unmurmuringly the needful cross, and there giving as to Christ the cup of cold water for simple discipleship's sake, everywhere adorning

the labours which it animates; here commending Christ to some, and there rejoicing greatly at His being regarded by others with those sentiments which befit His person, character, and claims; one while putting eloquence for Christ into the stammering tongue, and again leading a martyr to cry, 'I cannot argue for Him, but I can die for Him'; one while brimming over with watchfulness, lest the Master be by us ignobly dishonoured, and anon with self-sacrificing devotion resolving 'to fill up that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ for His body's sake, the Church,' that in all things He may have the pre-eminence. For 'if any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, he is Anathema Maranatha.' The Lord cometh. The Lord, though unseen, must be to us ever 'at hand'; and is now become by every title the sovereign of the heart.

CHAPTER IV

THE GAIN TO JOY

Rejoice *in the Lord* alway: again I say, rejoice.—St. Paul.

Serene will be our days, and bright
And happy will our nature be,
When love is an unerring light,
And joy its own security.

Wordsworth.

Thy joys are too great to enter into me,
Oh, make me fit to enter into them.

St. Augustine.

In Whom, *though now ye see Him not,* yet *believing,* ye *rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory*: receiving the *end* of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.—1 *Peter* i. 8.

CHAPTER IV

THE GAIN TO JOY

THERE is such a reality, such an unquestionable phenomenon of human experience, as spiritual joy, just as certain as there is physical, animal, intellectual, æsthetical, social, or any other joy. This religious joy is a joy that springs from spiritual sources and considerations, and is the expression of religious or spiritual experiences.

Speaking generally, joy is that emotion of delight which springs up in the mind when it finds itself possessed or sure of possessing what it thinks a good worth having. It is the feeling of having got, or the certain prospect of getting, what we love or like. It is an appanage or dependency of love, in the form of gratified desire, when love is resting in or has already attained its object.

So much is said of this joy, and it occupies so large and important a place in Scripture,

especially in its connection with an invisible Saviour, that it seems to demand some words of separate consideration. What large room is given to it in Psalm and Proverb, in Narrative and Prophecy, in Gospel and Epistle, in different texts that run through whole columns of an ordinary concordance!

How frequently joy is commanded and enjoined on us, as an indispensable requisite in all true and real religion! And what an essential element it is made in the religion of Jesus Christ! 'Rejoice in the *Lord*, ye righteous.' 'Joy in God, and be glad in the God of your salvation.' 'Let all them that seek Thee rejoice in Thee.' 'Rejoice in the Lord *alway*: again I say, rejoice.' Not to have this joy is both a misfortune and a fault. How often it is the subject of resolution and of prayer and of thankfulness! 'I will greatly rejoice in God.' 'My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.' 'Then will I go to God, *to God my exceeding joy.*' '*I will rejoice in the Lord*, and my soul shall be joyful in my God.' 'We will rejoice in Thy salvation.' 'Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation.' 'The God of all hope fill you with all joy . . . in believing.' And not less frequent are the expressions and

declarations of this spiritual joy as a true and habitual Christian experience. 'These things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.' 'For the fruit of the Spirit is . . . joy . . . the joy of the Holy Ghost.' 'Thus for the joy that was set before Him, Christ endured the cross.' 'These things have I said unto you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.' 'As sorrowing, yet always rejoicing, ye rejoice amid tribulation: the joy of the Lord is your strength.'

But what specially concerns us at present is the connection of this joy with a Saviour we have not seen, and the gain and advantage to it from His very invisibleness. 'Jesus Christ, Whom having not seen, ye love; in Whom, though now ye see Him not, yet *believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory*, receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.'

Here we find it hinted that Christ's invisibleness is a gain and advantage to spiritual joy in helping to insure:

(i) The right *object and order of joy.* 'In *Whom, though now seeing Him not, ye rejoice.*'

(ii) *The right way of rejoicing.* This joy is here connected with the exercisings of faith,

love, and hope in Christ unseen. 'In Whom *believing*, ye rejoice.' 'Whom not having seen, ye *love*, rejoicing with joy unspeakable.' And finally, it is the joy of hope—*full of glory*—the end of your faith.

(iii) *The right consummation, or goal, of joy.* 'Ye rejoice, receiving the end of your faith.' This, then, is a joy of faith, hope, and love in God our Saviour—a kind of joy the world can neither give nor take away.

(i) Christ's invisibleness a *gain* in guiding us to *the right object* of joy. There is something very irreligious in any one to whom religion is a gloom, or who has so far mistaken the religion of Jesus Christ as to associate it with dismal, or woful, or melancholic experiences. As well think that shadows come from the sunlight, as that gloom is a natural product of vital piety. That may be the dark portal into religion; but the religion itself it is not and cannot be. Surely they are to be pitied who do not find in Jesus Christ a spring and source of joy—of unfailing, albeit sober, and sacred, and holy delight.

They are much to be commiserated who have no other joy but what is derived from being amused or diverted—a legitimate enough source of joy after its own order,

but fit neither to be the supreme source and stay of our joy, nor belonging to the highest order of joy in itself. This low-toned and transient thing will never attain the distinction of being able 'to fill you with *all* joy.'

No doubt every sense, every appetite, desire, or faculty has an inherent capability of joy of its own, which is felt and realized whenever, and in so far as, these find their fitting objects. But what creates mere passing merriment is one of the smallest, shallowest, and least satisfactory sources of joy. It is a pleasant kind of joy for the moment, like the crackling of thorns under a pot—very bright and genial for the brief space it lasts, but too speedily followed with the ashes into which it so very soon resolves itself. The action of over-indulged joys, with all their thrills, is but too short and fitful to satisfy, with but too inevitable reaction. 'Such glorious beauty is as the fading flower on the head of the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine.' In their most legitimate forms they are alike defective and transient, and at their worst they become injurious and nauseous, if not even degrading. They belong, like forced and unnatural ex-

periences, to the seen or temporal, and so partake at once of its inherent insufficiency and unsatisfyingness.

The highest joy must always be commensurate with our highest powers of enjoyment; and the enjoyableness of joy will depend on its adaptation to our nature in its more abiding needs and relations, and no arbitrary appointment can ever dissociate highest joy from highest goodness. The highest joy cannot be vouchsafed to those who are not capable of being good, and it will be vouchsafed in quantity and quality according as good is attained or exercised. Joy in goodness for the sake of goodness is joy indeed.

If we joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, we are learning to 'enjoy God in all things, and to enjoy all things in God.' For by Him as our supreme prophet we are taught all the things of God which make us glad. Endless and exhaustless sources of joy are opened to us in the knowledge of God's love, which we have good occasion to delight in and welcome. For in proportion as we appreciate and yield to the influences of this saving and satisfying knowledge of God, imparted to the humble and receptive soul, we are enabled to render obedience to

the exhilarating command, 'Be glad in God, all ye righteous, and rejoice in Him, ye that are upright in your hearts'; and so we take up the no less exhilarating resolve, 'I will rejoice in God, and my spirit shall be glad in the God of my salvation.' So we are permitted and enjoined to 'sing unto the Lord, and come before His presence with joyfulness.' 'He hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad.' 'For the Lord is my strength and song, for He is become my salvation.' We sing for joy not only to the Lord, but we sing of Him as the Lord God of our redemption. This is what kindles all religious songs of thanks. It is the inspiration of the joyful notes of all psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs in which we make religious mirth and melody in our hearts to our God. 'Sing unto the Lord, ye saints of His, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness.' In this way we are kept on the right lines of joy so as to move in the direction of its highest and best sources. So we rejoice in the one great high-priest of our profession—our all-prevailing advocate and intercessor with the Father, who once gave Himself for us, a sacrifice unto God of a sweet-smelling savour, and who now

gives Himself to us for the joy and rejoicing of our hearts. We rejoice in Jesus Christ in all His offices, and for all the purposes for which He is granted to us as the unspeakable gift of the Father—the pledge and channel as it is of all other needed and promised blessings.

All joy of this kind is essentially independent of and superior to any mere outward or temporary sight of a Saviour; it is created and upheld by that abiding and perennially constant inner and blessed vision of the exalted, triumphant, and glorified Redeemer. So it is with us as with the first disciples. They could afford, after they had witnessed their Master's departure and final disappearance—which once they had so dreaded—to return to Jerusalem with great joy, 'and were continually in the temple, blessing and praising God.'

(ii) Christ's invisibleness a gain in helping to *keep us on* the *right road* to joy. An invisible Saviour does shut us up into the one and only right way of spiritual joy in the Lord—the way of faith, of hope, and of love toward Himself. The joy of the Christian life and experience comes from the primary objects of Christian faith, hope, and love, and

from their effects on dispositions, purposes, sentiments, conduct, and character. And they are much to be commiserated who have no faith rooted and grounded in God, the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and our own revealed God and Father in Him, who have no love that ascends to Him, and no hope that does not cling to and hang upon Him.

The way to highest joy in life consists, therefore, in rightly believing, hoping, and loving. Faith in Christ without joy were an entire anomaly—a well without water, an altar without incense, a summer without sunshine. Such faith may exist, indeed, without transports of gladness; but if void of joy, Christian faith were faith no longer. It is faith rightly founded and grounded that gives the soul possession of a sense of proprietorship in all the real consolations of the gospel promises and gospel blessings.

Hence we read so often of the warm and genial atmosphere of joy and rejoicing in which the early disciples lived and moved and had their being. A vein of sacred enjoyment pervaded all their lives. Of course, joy is a grace and blessing that can never stand alone, or be experienced by itself. Joy

cannot come just by our wishing for it. There is a way to it, and we must walk in that way. It is always associated with and represented as the attendant on and the fruit of other graces. And first and chiefly of faith, for it is represented as the result of appropriating the truths, the promises, the proffers, and the other blessings of Christ's Word and Gospel. The fruit of the Spirit is faith, love, and joy. The kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. With joy ye shall draw water from the wells of salvation. 'Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name; ask, and *receive*, that your joy may be full.' Rejoice evermore; in everything give thanks. So in the same alembic we must convert everything into food for joy. Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted, but the rich man in that he is made low. Beloved, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations, or ways for proving you.

Again, what a joy to know oneself to be loved, and to be loving in return; for 'when love is an unerring light, joy is its own security.' What a joy to have assurances of the Divine love, and to be exercising ourselves in the same happy grace both toward God and man! What a joy is the sense of having

bestowed our love worthily — bestowed it, moreover, on One Who will not suffer it to be frustrated or disappointed in its highest hopes! The magnitude of the sin and misery from which the love of God our Saviour rescues us has in it the highest cause for permanent joy, and it breeds and prompts that grateful joy which grows and grows with the gratitude that first awakened it. To be assured that all things work together for good to them that love God; to know that while not any suffering is for the present joyous, but grievous, yet to those that are rightly exercised thereby it worketh all manner of peaceful fruits of righteousness; that the Lord doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men; and that for no pleasure to Him, but for profit to us, He uses both kindness and severity in training us and turning us from all the evil that is itself the worst misery and woe; to know God as our Father, and Christ our Saviour, and the Holy Spirit our Tutor and Paraclete—these are constant fountains of joy always springing up and ever flowing — yea, and often overflowing—so that 'to rejoice in the Lord always' is no vain nor impossible attainment, but a simple form of loving obedience.

'Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season if need be ye are in heaviness through manifold trials.'

That is to say, whatever it may be on the surface, yet underneath and deep down in the Christianized nature there is a current of quiet joy that is separate from, yet genially harmonizes with, the upper and superficial tossings and turmoils of our lot. It is a light and heat felt and known when all God's waves and billows are passing over us, like that kind of fire that burns brightest under water, like that sure working of life under the cold and frozen snow which is evidenced by the blooming wild-flowers far up the snow-clad Alpine heights, though all unseen.

(iii) Christ's invisibleness a gain toward the *right consummation, purpose, or goal* of joy. Ye receive the accomplishment of your faith. Keeping the inward eye more or less fixed on the Saviour, Who is Himself our hope and Whom we shall yet see for ourselves, we are better able to 'rejoice in the glorious hope' of the full consummation of all we desire and all we expect to attain. Amid the corruptions, heart-breaks, disappointments, and embitterments of this present life, we have an antidote to such woes in the joyous assurance of an

inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, which is in reserve for us when we are ready for it, and to which we are being kept by the power of God through faith. This is the final reach and consummate flower and fruitage of the salvation here referred to, that is awaiting a full revelation and unveiling when we are in a state to appreciate it and enter upon it.

This joy is said to be unspeakable and full of glory. *Unspeakable*, or indescribable: too great to be put into words or expressed fittingly in any language of earth—an experience too deep for our powers of utterance and too high to be brought down to the level of speech. For it is full of glory: like the matchless light and glow of the hill-tops when bathed in the roseate hues of early dawn, before the actual sun itself is seen above the horizon, but which is the sure prelude of the approaching day and the unmistakable evidence of a fuller sunshine yet to disclose itself. For grace in the soul is but the dawn of glory, and highest glory is but greatest grace's risen day. People talk of the future life as *another* life; but it is the same life, the very same life, here and hereafter —in different stages and degrees, just as the light of dawn and the light of noonday is the

very same light in different measures and amounts.

There is an actual joy of salvation now and here; but it includes the anticipated joy of the same salvation in its perfected and completed stage, which has in it something quite unspeakable and full of glory.

For there are heights and depths and reaches of spiritual experience attained at times by some choice spirits even here and now that contain within themselves assurances of unfolding and unfading glories that dwarf all that 'eye hath seen, or ear heard, or that hath ever entered into our hearts to conceive,' and yet the very cravings and aspirations thus evoked give birth to joyous efforts after anticipations of a glorious liberty of God's children which is yet to be unveiled.

Such a glad and joyous impulse refuses to be cribbed, cabined, and confined within the bounds of present experiences or attainments. The placid stolidity of the lower creatures, with their unruffled and unreflecting content in present environment, may find repose in stationary existence. But a joy in present attainment insists on being supplemented in human nature when conscious of comparative imperfection, and yet haunted by a vision and

ideal of glory that should follow, with an advancing joy in accordance with its higher cravings and impulses.

The present life is not by any means, as some ignorantly fancy, the only life we know. For as long as there is a sense and a yearning after more ideal attainment, there is a gladdening and joyful assurance of such a state being attainable both here and hereafter. This is the joyous and strenuous life that nerves the soul for higher issues, and so anticipates a life more joyous still.

And what though this further goal be not seen as yet, must we entertain no gladsome expectations or make no joyful progress, nor aspire after better things, till we, in fact, have seen them? What is the spring and motive of all progress and advance, even in the comforts and amenities and dignity and worth of our natural life, if not the sense of want and shortcoming as to things we have never as yet seen? But we press forward and strain our best to have these things more clearly felt and grasped. The life of our barbarous ancestors is not our life; and the life of coming generations will be different again from ours. And the very prophets that hang all their joyous hopes and anticipations on

mere material advance are the foremost in portraying a life that shall throw the achievements of the present into the shade, and make our posterity think the conditions of our present life, on which we set such store, but the crude attempts of an outgrown and intolerable barbarism. With such prospects of indefinite advance, who of mankind may consistently cast a shade of doubt over reaches of joy that can be truly described as unspeakable and full of glory ?

Every one who lives must have some form of joyful anticipation, to make life at all worth living, and keep it from sinking down into its own ashes. To rejoice in glorious hope is the very condition of any human life that is worth calling life. And the joy of reaching forth to what we have not yet attained, but which we have good reason to think attainable, is one of the sweetest joys known to our human nature.

And what is true of all life is emphatically true of the life of the spirit—there is a joy in its very exercise and in the forth-putting of all its genial activities, whereby 'all other joys grow less to the one joy of doing kindnesses.' Especially is this so when it is conscious of holding within itself the pledge and preparation

for something higher and fuller. In no kind of life is this more realized, and of no order of life is this more true, than a life that has perfect excellence for its mark and goal. Believing in the complete salvation—a perfect state of being and of well-being, a fully restored humanity according to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ—we cannot but rejoice in this hope of glory. A life of growing conformity to that high ideal of an all-perfect and consummated state of salvation is a life that has at its root and centre a spring of vital and vitalizing joy. No doubt that is a spurious form of Christian life that lives only for joy. It is a false, because a selfish and self-seeking life, that makes its joy the first and chief of its aims. The true goal and prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus our Lord is the excellency of our resemblance to Him. That is the animating and ever-present motive—the end and object of our faith; but joy is the inevitable accompaniment of it—for of what use is spiritual joy but to be the harmonious reflex action and the inevitable attendant upon the influential operation of that faith which worketh by love, calleth hope into play, and is full of all good fruits? This joy is in no league with the selfishness of the

human heart, any more than that it is the baseless fabric of a visionary and unrealizable dream. For it has the witness within itself; and while it rejoices in glorious hope it attains to a quiet and steadfast assurance. 'Thou wilt show me the path of life; in Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.'

CHAPTER V

THE GAIN TO SPIRITUALITY IN RELIGION

God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit.—*John* iv. 24.

We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.—2 *Cor.* iv. 18.

The lust of the eyes . . . is not of the Father.—1 *John* ii. 16

He endured, as seeing Him Who is invisible.—*Heb.* xi. 27.

Better to walk with the Lord in the dark,
Than to walk alone in the light.
Better to walk in the dark by faith;
Than to walk alone by sight.

CHAPTER V

THE GAIN TO SPIRITUALITY IN RELIGION

Spirituality is of the essence of vital religion. For religion is nothing, if not an appeal to the invisible. It is based on the conviction of invisible spirit, and implies spiritual converse and communion. Whatever else it is, religion involves a conception of some spiritual presence, influence, and service. Even many an untutored pagan associates with his idol or image some hidden being or power; and while this does not prevent the materializing of religion, it raises even this low form above mere fetishism or materialism. To make religion hang upon the invisible, if not to the exclusion, yet to the disparagement comparatively of the material or tangible, helps to raise it above both the magical and the mechanical, and to purge it from the many pagan corruptions to which it is otherwise so

liable. For average human nature is prone to sink under the dominion of things seen and temporal, and to cleave to them, as if they were the only or at least the most surely ascertainable realities. And this is altogether apart from any consistent or intelligently conceived materialistic theory or system, which is ever likely to be confined to a small section of hard-headed and frequently hard-hearted people.[1] But there is a practical form of materialism which is very congenial to human beings of a low, selfish, irreligious sort, which concerns itself mainly, sometimes exclusively, with 'what shall we eat, and what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed?'

Against this spirit and attitude the conception of an invisible Saviour is not merely a standing protest, but a very real and helpful gain. It presents certain tests and ideals of thought and action; and by applying these all round we can see what gain may accrueto the spirituality of religion.

(i) Christ invisible is a *standing protest against a materializing conception or estimate of human nature.* It tends to rescue and

[1] As Huxley fitly says: 'I individually am no materialist, but, on the contrary, believe materialism to involve grave philosophical error.'—Lecture on 'The Physical Basis of Life.'

detach men from materialistic views of our common *humanity* and from a materialistic standard of *human life*.

For men to live only in the visible, is to live low down in the scale of being. To live in and for the senses, is to approximate to animalism, or to that degeneracy of human nature which would reduce to a minimum whatever differentiates it from the brute creation. Insensibility to the unseen, how it detracts from the worth and dignity of a man by dragging him down to the verge of the irrational! If carried out consistently to its logical issues, it would justify a man dealing with his fellow man as but a superior animal, and would entitle him to extend to him just what such an animal's position requires. It would justify a return to slavery, and to all the horrors of the savage state, as being the natural and appropriate one for a creature immersed in and occupied only about secular and material things. What a caricature this would be of human nature!

Man will worship; but for him to worship at the shrine of the visible and material alone, would be to enter into the spirit of the beast that goeth downward, and to discredit and set at nought the 'spirit of a man' that

looketh upward, as the very structure of even his material frame itself shows.

Men take after what they worship, and are moulded upon their conceptions of the God they serve. For it is just 'as He is, so are we in this world.' And the converse also holds good—'as we ourselves are, so will we fashion the object we worship.' Low conceptions here mean low conceptions of ourselves, of our nature, our life, and the nature, life, and claims of others.

Mere materialism therefore tends to barbarism. Its creed of 'Believe just in what you see and eat and feel and smell, and make it a chief or only end of life to better the physical and material condition,' means in its ultimate issue inevitable death to civilized existence. Doubtless all the elements of material and physical well-being are to be sedulously cultivated and attended to, but not exclusively or supremely. This outer and lower side of nature is a side of duty we ought to do, while not leaving the inner and higher side undone. 'Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things [which the heathen put first and foremost] shall be added unto you.' There is no security for advanced civilization apart from a sense

of invisible and perennial realities. This sense may be weak and, to a large extent, inoperative in many natures, but to abolish it altogether implies that the framework of civilized life must fall to pieces, as a skeleton does when the backbone is abstracted. Even human law, which aims only at visible order or social well-being, and which lays chief stress on such virtues, as truth, honesty, and justice, that hold society together, can never itself safely ignore appeals to the invisible conditions and influences of life.

Thus the conception of Christ invisible, while it may not necessarily amount to positive security against materialistic habits of thought and action, is yet on the negative side an abiding protest against self-satisfied materialism.

(ii) The conception of a Christ invisible is *a standing protest against mere materializing of worship and religious ordinances.* We have a twofold nature indeed, and both sides of it must engage in and be served and suited by worship. While we are 'in the body' we need outward helps to worship, yet 'bodily service' profiteth little, and may be easily divorced from a worship in spirit. We have ever to guard against turning God's worship into a formality or parade of mere ritual and

ceremonial observance. Religion, to be of any vital worth, must have a truly spiritual principle at its centre, so as to maintain a solid core of vital heat.

A craving after or a resting in a religion of outward rites and ceremonies is no fruit of the spirit, but is essentially a something bred of superstition, or issuing in it. For what is the essence of superstition but an expectation that spiritual results will necessarily accrue in some mechanical or *opus operatum* sort of way from a merely material use of material means?

Yet the mere going through a form of worship is no worship at all, however excellent the form may be, unless both head and heart be engaged at the time in the service. And it is a matter of common observation that when men cease to worship in spirit, they soon cease to worship in truth. So readily do they adopt devices of their own fancy, which they think to answer better than what is morally or divinely presented because they accord better with their own tastes and likings. This is the origin and fruitful source of superstitious corruptions in religious observances. And as we at present find human nature, how prone it is to prefer the material to the spiritual in religion, the speculative to the practical, the sentimen-

tal to the moral, the mechanical to the dynamical, the outward to the inward, the subordinate to the essential, and external rites to vital principles! How easily do many imagine that prayer offered in one place is more effectual than that offered in another—in a church, for example, than in a private chamber, or before the image of some saint rather than of some other; or that wearing some sacred relic will secure protection against evil spirits, or against some misfortune, or bad-luck, or evil disease! What is all this but magic, and not religion at all? and how rebuked it stands before the conception of an invisible Christ being Himself our only Saviour!

Nor is any so-called simplicity or baldness of service a guarantee for spirituality in worship. How easily may the plainest service degenerate into slovenliness, if the invisible Saviour is not Himself realized! How easy for ordinances of grace to be regarded as though they were of themselves guarantees of the grace of ordinances; as if the laying down of water-pipes should necessarily involve the presence of water in them! There may be the best and most æsthetic aids of worship, but how readily may the means be regarded as an end, and how speedily

the handmaid or servant may usurp the position of master or mistress! The things of the Spirit must be spiritually discerned; and the invisibleness of Christ is an aid to spiritual discernment, or the felt need of it.

Forms of worship we must use, but not mere forms apart from inner thought and desire.[1]

Christ's invisibleness is a constant reminder that true and acceptable worship requires not outward ceremonies so much as inward thought and desire; that the moral in worship is always of higher moment than the ritual; that true piety has to do primarily with the internal and spontaneous working of our spirit rather than with the circumstantials of place, posture, or other mere externals in the precincts of the senses.

(iii) Christ's invisibleness is a standing protest against a materializing estimate of *His own life upon earth.* The most materialistic view of that earthly life is to regard it as something detached from the ever-abiding life of His which is set forth in His own great

[1] This world is a Form; our bodies are Forms; and no visible acts of devotion can be without forms. But yet the less form in religion the better, since He Whom we worship is a Spirit. The more mental our worship the more adequate and suitable to Him.—William Penn.

word, 'Lo! I am with you alway.' It were mischievous to conceive of His life as something belonging only to the records of the past, and yet more mischievous to deal with it as a matter chiefly of antiquarian interest and curiosity, such as gathers round more humanly distinguished names and characters of bygone days. This is a low, false, and wholly unworthy point of view; as if Jesus had played His part on the world's stage, had left an abiding mark and influence, like other great heroes, teachers, sages, and the like, and whose few years of earthly life and action can be best understood and illustrated by inquiries into their external circumstances and environment—into the customs of the people, the climate, the topography, the language, the idioms or dialects, the political and social usages in the midst of which He lived and moved. What a protest against all this we may find in Christ as an invisible reality!

No doubt all this is valuable and very precious as a framework for vivifying and enhancing the features of His outer biography; but if the appreciation of His life ends there, the true significance of even His earthly existence is evacuated, and the main appeal

is made to the merely natural intelligence, while the real inwardness of His mission to earth is quietly ignored, and the whole glory of His person, His power, and His abiding presence is kept in the background, if not entirely relegated to the visionary sphere of theological abstractions.

Christ invisible is the assurance to us of His abiding life and action, still as real and true as any life and action of His on earth, when He walked on it in bodily form centuries ago.

Christ invisible attests the ever-living, the ever-present, the ever-operative Lord and Redeemer.

Many are tempted to deal with Holy Scripture in the same naturalistic way. Now, the invisibleness of Christ is:

(iv) A standing protest against *materializing methods of handling the living oracles of the Word of God.* It tends to lift the mind from materializing *views of Holy Scripture.* The record of the Divine revelation, which culminates in the life, character, and work of Jesus Christ, is given us in the form of a book, in a volume called the Bible, which we can see, and read, and handle. This physically visible witness to the truth we

are apt to mistake for the truth itself of which it testifies, and many are tempted to put the one in place of the other. Longing for a trusty external support of their faith, many are ready to lean upon it, rather than upon Him of Whom it is meant to testify. There is a vast amount of honest Christian faith that quietly reposes upon the Bible, rather than upon Him for Whose sake it was written. Many people, if asked on what their faith rests, will answer at once, 'On the Bible.' Why do they hold the Christian faith? Simply and wholly, they will say, because the Bible tells them so. It is through the Bible they know it, and because of the Bible they receive it. In short, they forget that the Bible is a means to an end, and not the final end itself; it is a help to Christian faith, not the object of that faith—still less the foundation of it. Yet what, they say, do we know of Jesus the Saviour except through the Bible? And so the Bible comes in between them and the Saviour, just as ofttimes a means of grace like the Lord's Supper, instead of leading to the Saviour, is put in His place and usurps the honour due to Himself alone. A star is revealed to us through a telescope;

but the telescope is not the star, and is not to be the object of our gaze, however wonderful an object it may be of itself. The Bible is only the telescope—a truthful and truth-registering instrument, no doubt—but our faith must find its final object not in the instrument itself, but in Him Whom it brings into view.

Bibliolatry, or blind Bible-worship, may be and often is a very seriously materializing use and misconception of what the Bible really is and what it is for. For the Bible is of the highest value, not so much in what it may outwardly exhibit and teach, as in what it authoritatively and spiritually suggests. It is wonderful not only in what, when read, it presents to the eye in simple and unmistakable form, but in what it conveys of things invisible and Divine to the spiritually-taught soul.

Thus it is, like outer Nature itself, inexhaustibly suggestive. There is no end to what it contains. But this exhaustlessness is in its subject-matter, not in its own conveyancing power. No doubt a telescope must give us assurance of the accuracy and exactness of itself as an instrument, if we are to trust its witnessing power and testimony. But this means we must test it, adjust it, critically

handle it; for it exists for the purpose, not of giving assurance of itself so much as of giving assurance to us that by it we accurately descry what it is meant to reveal and bring to our view. But while we ought to do this, we ought not to become wholly absorbed with it, as if it were the main thing. This is no reason why any should become so engrossed in the externals of Scripture or in questions of higher or lower criticisms, or in matters of antiquarian, archæological, or literary interest, as to forget or become oblivious to the higher realities of the spiritual, eternal, and invisible things for which alone it actually exists.

(v) Christ's invisibleness is a standing *protest against materializing conceptions of the Church.* No doubt the Church has its visible and mundane side, entering as it does into human, social, and political history, and having its relations to property, business, and other earthly associations. For these ends it has an organization and a temporal side, which, however, it is easy to overvalue, and to which there may be undue importance attached. For it is primarily a fellowship rather than an organization; a society or mystical body rather than an ecclesiastical constitution which is largely of human devising and ordering.

The appreciation of a King and Head invisible over it forbids that it should usurp His place and prerogatives or put itself in His room, but it requires that she should be faithful to her high calling, and never lose sight of the ends she ought to serve and for which she chiefly subsists.

For while it is the Saviour alone Who saves, and it is only He Who can raise the spiritually dead, open the eyes of the spiritually blind, and vouchsafe the blessings of grace to the spiritually needy, the Church must realize she is Christ's Church, subordinate to Himself, and subsisting for the accomplishment of His work and in His Spirit.

The Church can point the way, can preach the truth, and proffer the life; but it is His prerogative alone to say, 'I *am* the way, I *am* the truth, I *am* the life.' But as the pillar and ground of the truth the Church must hold Christ up before the eyes of men and seek to exalt Him and make Him visible to the world; its business being to witness for Him, and truly to represent Him before men, and be a rallying-place for all to worship Him and manifest that they belong to His service.

The Church is formed as a union and brotherhood for establishing and advancing

the kingdom of God, for maintaining a high standard of spiritual character, and for aiding in the development of a progressively Christian life and experience. It is not, indeed, itself the kingdom of God, which is meant to cover all the activities of men and all the varied interests of earthly existence, so as to permeate them all with the Christian spirit and subdue them all to the Christian ideal; but it is the instrument and agency in the hand of the Divine Spirit for accomplishing these ends, and for turning the whole family of mankind into a real family of God on earth, and for making the kingdoms of this world the kingdom of our God and of His Christ. It is for this end that the Church is endowed with certain spiritual rights and prerogatives, so as to manifest itself as a really Divine institution, moulding and nourishing the faith, hope, and love of its members, and so qualifying itself for its great mission of spreading the Gospel throughout all the world. From these high claims and aims it must never allow itself to be dragged down to seek earthly things or be moulded by earthly models and standards.

(vi) Finally, the conception of an invisible Christ is a standing protest against any materializing of *the Christian life itself*. This

is a life that aims at something higher than what is simply of the earth, earthy, and keeps its eye on other than mere outward, worldly, and conventional morality. It is a life born from above, and that tends, therefore, upwards. It has springs and motives very different from those which are derived solely or supremely from considerations of time and sense. It is a life that is lived in the world, but is not itself of the world. It has an affection set upon things above, and not solely or chiefly upon things that are on the earth. Not that it runs away out of the world, or neglects the duties and requirements of the relationships of earth, or breaks the natural ties that bind men in family, social, ecclesiastical, political, and other outward fellowships; but it has its sources and resources none the less 'hid with Christ in God.' Its thoughts and desires are not bounded by the sphere of the visible, material, or physical. It has discovered another and superior sphere of conscious, active existence, in which it finds itself at home, and to which it can withdraw for pleasures and treasures it cannot find outside and beyond it—as a man retreats from the cares and toils and worries of his business hours to the quiet and calm and peace he

finds in the bosom and affections and occupancies of his family. In the world, it is not a life conformed to the world and not dominated by the world, but transformed by the renewing of its disposition, and so seeking to overcome the evil, and not be overcome by it. In this respect it follows in the footsteps of the Leader and Lord, Who lived in a high sense for the world and for its good, bore the world's burdens, and felt for and shared its temptations, sufferings, and griefs, yet lived high above the standard, views, ends, and aims of this outer and passing fashion of things; using all, yet abusing none of them, knowing that they neither abide, nor do they satisfy. In Christ is life—life worth living, a life drawing support from the ever-present yet invisible Christ of God, and enjoying experiences that wing their way like the dove to where it knows true peace, comfort, protection, and joyous hope can always be found. It fixes its eye and its grasp on things above, where Christ Himself sitteth; and while it looks not at things which are seen, but at things which are unseen, it is hid as in an upper pavilion from fears and forebodings. As well might the wind and storm, the rain and sleet, be conceived of as driven upward

against 'the sunny blue that overarches them' as that the peace and tranquil assurance of this higher life can be disturbed and destroyed by the stormy clouds and threatening blasts that are generated of the present and visible condition of things, but which pertain not to the constitution of things unseen and eternal.

THE END

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